Hafa Adai!

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DPL revocation of JGS mining permit affirmed. **PAGE 2**

2 masked men stage armed robbery on New Year's Day. **PAGE 3**

AP

In this May 30, 2008 file photo provided by the U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates takes an aerial tour of the Island of Guam during a recent trip to Anderson Air Force Base.

Guam, focus of new US strategy, faces hurdles

AP

In this July 20, 2008 file photo provided by the U.S. Air Force, F-22 Raptors join 16 F-15E Strike Eagles on the flight line of Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

By ERIC TALMADGE
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (AP)—Sprawling toward the horizon in every direction, Andersen Air Force Base is surprisingly quiet, leaving the impression of a big, empty parking lot.

For now, anyway.

Over the next six years, nearly 25,000 U.S. Marines, soldiers, family members and civilian Defense Department employees are to descend on the tiny Pacific island of Guam, transforming the sleepy tropical outpost into a hub of America's military in the Pacific.

But the metamorphosis seems as fragile as it is ambitious.

Guam's transformation will cost at

See GUAM on Page 4

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POLL RESULTS

Do you support the SEDC proposal to eliminate all poker machines in the CNMI, except those at licensed casinos, by June 30, 2009?

Yes-**87**

No-**13**

No opinion-**2**

Sunday, January 04, 2009

97 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Bush Legacy

President George W. Bush will be judged on what he did. He will also be remembered for what he's like: a fast-moving, phrase-mangling Texan who stays upbeat even though his country is not.

Nation...Page 15

Travolta Tragedy

The Bahamas will use two pathologists to ensure a careful autopsy on John Travolta's son, who died at the actor's vacation home in Grand Bahama, the territory's health minister said Saturday.

Life & Style...Page 19

Kilili names staff, opens DC office

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Delegate-elect Gregorio "Kilili" C. Sablan, who will officially open his office at the U.S. capital today, has announced his staff selections.

Sablan

"I am very pleased to have assembled such an experienced and capable staff to work in the Northern Marianas and in Washington," Sablan said. "Each of these people is committed to helping the Northern Marianas and has proven

See KILILI on Page 4

Bush to declare Marine Monument fate on Jan. 6

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Friends of the Monument chair Ignacio V. Cabrera, Council for Environmental Quality chair James Connaughton, Friends of the Monument vice chair Andrew Salas, and Angelo Villagomez, Beautify CNMI founder.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

President Bush is set to declare the fate of the proposed Mariana Trench Marine National Monument tomorrow (Tuesday Jan. 6) at the White House, according to Friends of the Monument.

The group, the most ardent supporters of the project in the CNMI, was invited to attend the ceremony.

In a statement to media yesterday, Friends of the Monument said they expect Bush to issue his important remarks on conservation and environment and that they are optimistic that the President will approve the proposal.

"This will be the first time for all those invited to attend an event at the White House," the group noted.

See BUSH on Page 4

Local

DPL revocation of JGS mining permit affirmed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has affirmed the decision of the Department of Public Lands to revoke the mining permit issued to JG Sablan Rock Quarry Inc. which permitted the company to mine pozzolan and basalt on the island of Pagan for 20 years.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman in his order issued on Wednesday ruled that DPL's decision to revoke JG Sablan's mining permit was reasonable.

"There were multiple, legitimate reasons to revoke the permit and the decision was based on substantial evidence," Wiseman said.

Further, the judge pointed out, JG Sablan was put on notice well before the permit was actually terminated that they were in violation of the permit and facing possibly revocation.

"In fact, two other company's permits were terminated for similar reasons but after less egregious violations. JGS cannot now assert that their permit was unreasonably revoked," Wiseman concluded.

The CNMI government sued JGS, asking the Superior Court to declare as unconstitutional Public Law 15-21, the law that reinstated JGS's permit to mine pozzolan. JGS filed a counter lawsuit against DPL.

In 2007, Wiseman determined that DPL afforded JGS sufficient due process before revoking the company's mining permit because the permit terms provided sufficient process for revocation and were exclusive of those provided under the Administrative Procedure Act.

In June 2008, Wiseman issued a second order denying DPL's second motion for summary judgment. He held that JGS did not violate Article 14 of the permit and the alleged violation could not form the basis for the revocation of their mining permit.

Wiseman then set a status conference for July 10, 2008 in order for the court to get complete record before resolving other issues.

The remaining issues discussed in this Wednesday's decision are the following:

- Whether JGS by its inaction or action breached the terms of the permit.
- Whether the DPL should be estopped from terminating JGS'S mining permit because of the acts or omissions of its agency predecessors in interest.
- Whether the statute of limitations prevents DPL from revoking the permit.

In addition to denying that they violated the terms of the permit, JGS argued that DPL should be estopped from asserting that JGS violated the permit because it was waived by DPL's predecessors in interest.

END OF AN ERA CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lowering the CNMI Flag on the last day of the Marianas House in Washington, D.C., as the Office of the Resident Representative. The first CNMI Resident Representative to Washington, Edward DLG Pangelinan, and the last, Pedro A. Tenorio bring down the CNMI flag that was displayed daily at the entrance to the Marianas House at 2121 R St NW. Pangelinan and Tenorio were also members of the Marianas Political Status Commission that helped negotiate the Covenant and became P.L. 94-241. The Office of the Resident Representative has been abolished with the enactment of P.L. 110-229, which finally granted the CNMI a Delegate to the U.S. Congress.

With respect to the inaction or action issue, Wiseman said JGS's failure to generate revenue for more than two consecutive years (in fact, they generated no revenue for more than 10 years) "is a blatant violation of the terms of the mining permit."

The permit, Wiseman said, clearly requires that JGS generate revenues.

He said JGS was unable to do so for more than two consecutive years.

If JGS presented evidence that they did, in fact, generate revenue—the reasonableness of the DPL Secretary John S. Del Rosario Jr.'s decision would warrant close scrutiny, Wiseman said.

"However, no such evidence was presented. Moreover, this particular violation is egregious, defeats the purpose of the permit, and is harmful to the interests of the public," he said.

Wiseman said he is convinced that on the basis of this violation alone, which there is substantial evidence of, Del Rosario's decision was reasonable.

The judge said the failure of JGS to submit a development plan was a violation of the mining permit.

"However, whether or not this violation, standing alone, would reasonably justify the termination of the permit is unnecessary determination in light of the other violations," he noted.

Wiseman said he is inclined to agree with JGS that if the company wandered off its designated area in its mining operations, forfeiture of the permit may not be the proper remedy.

Wiseman said according to JGS, which DPL does not deny, the other two mining companies which held permits never lodged any complaints about JGS being in their mining territory.

Nonetheless, the judge said, the evidence strongly supports the secretary's finding that JGS did conduct mining outside of the perimeter of Pagan's Parcel A.

Therefore, the judge said, substantial evidence existed which showed that JGS did breach the permit in this respect and the Secretary's conclusion that the company strayed outside of Parcel A was reasonable.

Wiseman said the secretary had also before him substantial evidence that JGS failed to pay royalties and other fees in accordance with the permit.

"Thus, revocation of the permit on this ground was reasonable," he said.

On the acts of the predecessors issue, Wiseman said the Marianas Public Lands Authority's decision not to terminate the permit was not an act of negligence, nor is MPLA's acceptance of the fees from JGS.

At that time, Wiseman said, JGS concedes that MPLA had no intention of revoking the permit.

"Therefore, there is no allegation that MPLA acts were fraudulent or deceptive," he said.

Wiseman said MPLA's successor, DPL, determined that the failures of JGS had been overlooked by MPLA too many times and to the detriment of the CNMI.

Simply stated, the judge said, the government agency in charge of the permit decided to enforce the terms of the permit.

"This is not a showing of affirmative misconduct," he said.

"Courts are hesitant to apply the principles of estoppel to government agencies. In light of the difficult burden JGS bears to show estoppel is appropriate and in light of the complete absence of a showing of affirmative misconduct, estoppel is not appropriate," Wiseman said.

On the statute of limitations issue, JGS argued that the statute of limitations bars DPL from relying on many of the alleged violations as grounds for revocation of the permit.

DPL argued that the statute of limitations has no relevance to agency proceedings initiated by the Department under the permit.

Wiseman said statutes of limitations merely restrict the length of time in which a court may properly have jurisdiction over a matter after a cause of action arises.

"Statutes of limitations do not prevent a party to a contract from exercising their right to terminate the contract," he said.

Wiseman said while DPL's time may have expired to bring a claim for damages against JGS, DPL's time to revoke the permit does not expire.

"There is nothing which limits the termination of the permit to a designated period of time after the infracting conduct," he added.

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KRISTI EATON

Lt. Gov. Timothy Villagomez and Miss Marianas Sorene A. Maratita listen as Gov. Benigno R. Fitial announces this month as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

DPH head: Pap smears should not be forgotten

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

While it is important women receive the human papillomavirus vaccine, a regular pap smear should also be a must for every female, the Public Health secretary said last week.

During the proclamation signing kicking off Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, Sec. Joseph Kevin Villagomez reiterated the important role pap smears play in women's health.

"It's been a wonderful year with the HPV campaign, but I wanted to relay out to the community, while HPV is a great thing for the community, it is by no means the panacea to the problems of cervical cancer," he said. "I think women should continue to rely on the pap smear as a very important tool and that, unfortunately, still a lot of our women in this community fail to see their doctor for their annual pap smear."

Villagomez said he was proud to see male members of the governor's cabinet at the proclamation signing, saying it shows the community approach needed to fight cervical cancer.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said there have been more than 70 cases of cervical cancer diagnosed in the CNMI in the last 10 years, meaning the rate in the Commonwealth is twice as high as Hawaii or the U.S. mainland. Rates among women of Chamorro or Carolinian descent is more than three times higher than Hawaii or the U.S. mainland, he added.

The Commonwealth Cancer Association president Alexander Sablan said most invasive cancers are found in women who have not received pap smears. Many women have the mistaken idea that once they have children they can stop getting a regular pap smears, which is not true, he said.

"They should continue to receive regular screenings," he added.

2 masked men stage armed robbery on New Year's Day

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A maintenance worker was injured when one of two masked men attacked him with an object during a robbery at a store in San Vicente on New Year's Day.

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Santiago Tudela confirmed on Friday to *Saipan Tribune* that the armed robbery indeed occurred. Tudela, however, said investigators were still completing the report at that time.

The maintenance worker, described as a male Chinese, was injured on the chest.

The two suspects, believed to be citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, ran away after getting close to $3,000 from C.Y.C. San Vicente Store, the store owner told *Saipan Tribune* during an interview yesterday.

Preliminary investigation showed that two masked men, both armed with knives, entered C.Y.C. San Vicente Store along Isa Drive on Thursday at 11:30pm and pointed the weapons at a female cashier.

The suspects asked the cashier to hand over the money. The maintenance worker, who was in the warehouse of the store at the time, heard the cashier shouting.

As soon as the maintenance worker exited the warehouse to check on the cashier, one of the suspects suddenly hit him with an object on his chest.

The maintenance worker collapsed. After getting money from the cashier, the suspects ran across the highway. The suspects fled toward Nativo Drive that leads to Laolao Bay.

The store owner, who asked not to be identified, said the robbery was completed less than five minutes.

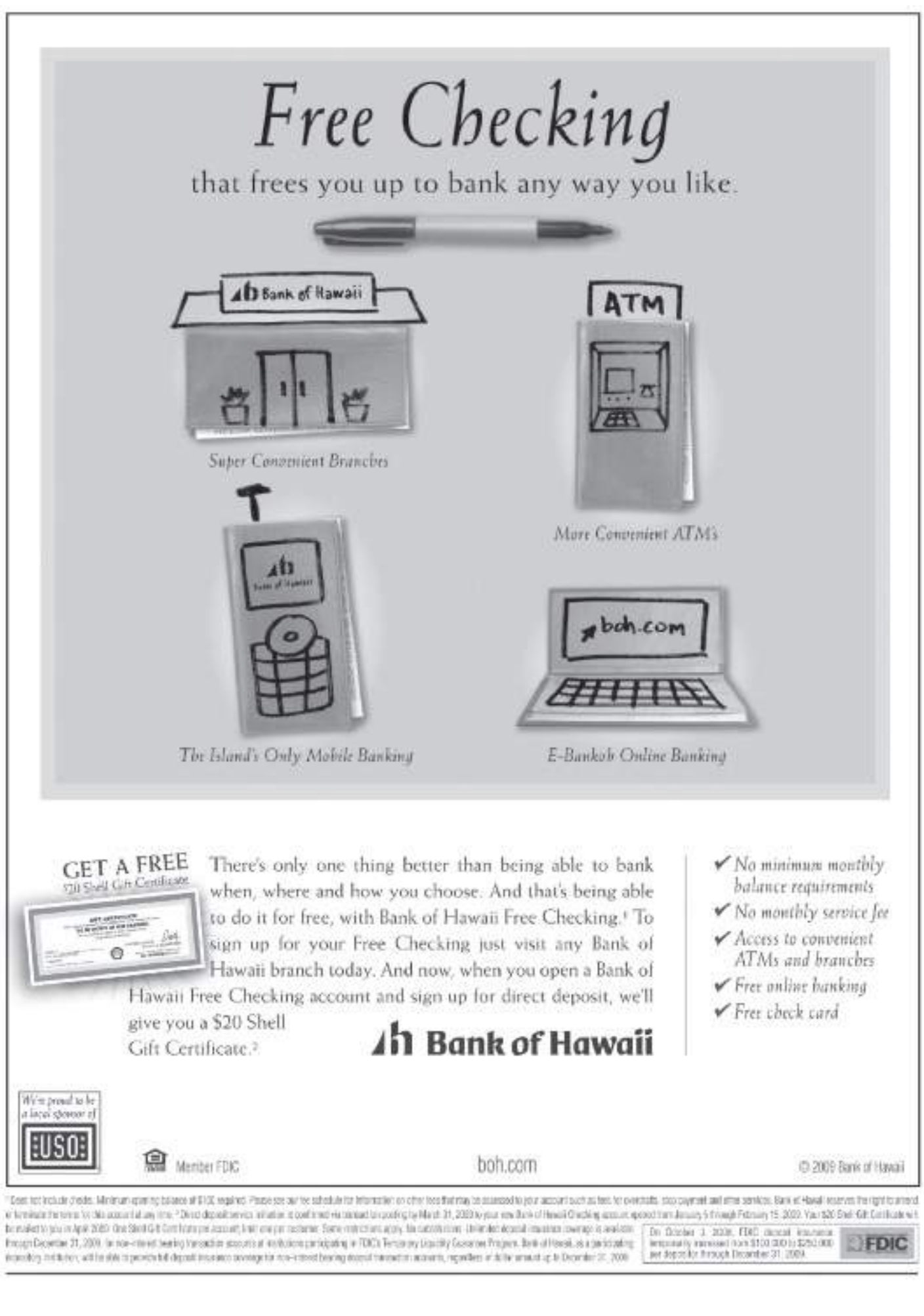
The owner said four years ago the same store was also burglarized, but until now no one has been arrested.

C.Y.C. has other branches in Koblerville and in Kagman.

Last Dec. 8, an unidentified man robbed a woman who was walking along a secondary road in Afetnas.

The victim, a 27-year-old Chinese, lost her plastic bag containing clothes, a cellphone, and a wallet.

A week before the Afetnas robbery, a masked man reportedly robbed a 78-year-old man who was sitting outside of his residence in Chalan Kanoa.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New FY '08 budget numbers show surplus

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

A new report from the Department of Finance shows a budget surplus of $110,000 for fiscal year 2008, as opposed to an $18 million deficit earlier reported.

In his Nov. 26 report the Legislature, Finance Secretary Eloy Inos said his office was showing $13.6 million in excess expenditures and obligations over the $160.1 million budget. The department was also reporting $4.5 million in revenue shortfall.

That report showed the government went on "continuing resolution," spending at the prior year's level of $160.1 million. However, the government collected only $155.6 million and spent $173.7 million.

Inos

But since that time, Inos said his office received $17.2 million from the U.S. Treasury as final settlement on a long-standing cover-over issue. Because the payment was received within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, the amount must be accrued in the 2008 budget.

Inos, in his report to the governor, said there also is an additional $700,000 in revenue that came in, lowering the revenue shortfall from $4.5 million to $3.8 million.

The new numbers show $13.415 million in net additional revenue and $13.305 million in excess expenditures over the continuing resolution appropriations.

"Based on the above and as preliminarily reported in my November 26, 2008 letter to House Speaker Arnold Palacios, the CNMI reports a budgetary surplus of $110,496 for fiscal year 2008," Inos said.

Gov. Benigno Fitial, in his letter to Palacios and Senate President Pete Reyes presenting the new numbers, noted that the law allows 120 days from the end of the fiscal year for completion of accruals, adjustments, and encumbrances which may change total amounts.

The 2008 total have been submitted to the auditors, Fitial said.

KILILI

From Page 1

their dedication over many years. I know having such a strong team working with me will be a tremendous help in doing the job I have been elected to do."

Bob Schwalbach will be Sablan's Chief of Staff. Schwalbach, who worked for the CNMI government for two decades, served as congressional liaison in the Resident Representative's office for 12 years. He also worked as senior policy advisor for Gov. Juan N. Babauta and as staff to the Natural Resources and Commerce committees in the 6th Northern Marianas House of Representatives. Schwalbach, a theater studies graduate from Harvard University, first worked with Sablan in the 1980s in the NMI Legislature.

Arin Greenwood has been selected as Sablan's Senior Legislative Assistant and Communications Director. Greenwood, a former CNMI Assistant Attorney General, first worked with Sablan when she represented the Commonwealth Election Commission during the time Sablan was Executive Director. Prior to working as an Assistant Attorney General, she served as a law clerk to Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan of the Commonwealth Supreme Court. Greenwood, who also worked as an administrative judge for the Marianas' first ever refugee protection program, will focus on immigration as one of her responsibilities as Senior Legislative Assistant. Greenwood is currently a fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based think tank. During her time there she has written about insurance, immigration and online gambling. As a freelance journalist and writer, she has written for many publications including *Slate*, the *Washington CityPaper* and the *American Bar Association Journal*. She received her B.A. in philosophy from Oberlin College and her J.D. from Columbia Law School, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar.

Becky Cruz Lizama, a recent graduate of Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon, will serve as a Legislative Assistant in Sablan's congressional office, where she will work on environmental and natural resource issues.

Rose Cruz McDermott will be in charge of overall office operations on Capitol Hill and manage the Delegate's schedule. McDermott has worked for the CNMI Resident Representative since 1992.

The location of Sablan's office in the Northern Marianas has not been finalized, but the delegate-elect has selected staff members.

Peter Michael Tenorio has been named Sablan's district director. He will be responsible for constituent issues as they arise in the CNMI and advise Sablan on issues facing people of the Commonwealth.

Tenorio was chairman of Sablan's kilili08 campaign committee. He was a member of the 10th Commonwealth Legislature, during which he was chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Tourism.

Viola Alepuyo will act as part-time legal counsel to Sablan. In order to continue her work in private practice in the CNMI, Alepuyo will be limited to matters in which the federal government has no interest or involvement. Alepuyo, who received her B.A. in Women's Studies from Washington State University and her J.D. from the University of Idaho College of Law, is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm and Shield.

Sablan's Washington office is located at 423 Cannon House Office Building. Sablan will be sworn in with other delegates on Tuesday.

BUSH

From Page 1

Andrew Salas, vice chair of the group, said he always thought that Bush would designate the monument, which would cover 115,000 square miles encompassing the three islands of Maug, Asuncion, and Uracas in the northeastern part of the CNMI.

"But I can hardly believe that it is finally happening," noted Salas, a former member of Congress who is also invited to attend the declaration.

Last month, Salas was in Washington to convince White House officials as well as media people on the social and economic benefits that such a project would give to the people of the CNMI.

"After a year of back and forth in the letters to the editors section of the newspapers, endless numbers of public meetings, and hours spent collecting signatures we're finally going to get our monument," Salas said.

The group said in its statement that the invitation to the White House to witness the signing of the monument declaration comes amid media reports that Bush has considered scaling back the proposed area and protections they had been proposing—a project that has politically divided the people of the CNMI.

The group's chairman Ignacio V. Cabrera, who is a former director of Divisions of Environmental Quality, explained that when 6,000 residents signed a petition it was to protect the entire ecosystem.

"Our people want our monument to be big and we want the protections to be strong, " he said.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, his cabinet members, and most of the members of the CNMI Legislature are against the proposal because of what they fear as dislocating the economic wellbeing of the CNMI.

The Friends of the Monument petitioned the president to designate a large, no-take monument during the fall, and claimed to have gathered some 6,000 signatures from residents, as well as hundreds of letters from students, islands leaders, and businesses.

"Even though the protections and the scope of the monument are expected to be scaled down, the Friends are still appreciative of President Bush," the group said.

Agnes McPhetres, vice chair and former president of Northern Marianas College, said that if the monument is smaller than they have proposed it would just be amenable for them.

"We still applaud President Bush for taking the first step. The Marianas will still get a visitors' center, an enforcement boat, co-management, an advisory council to the monument, federal jobs, and loads of media attention," McPhetres noted.

She also said, however, that starting from the day he is sworn in, the group will lobby President Obama to come in and finish the job.

"We set out to protect an entire ecosystem and that is what we intend to do, " she said.

All the top leaders of Micronesia, including Palau, Guam, CNMI, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia have expressed their opposition to the proposed project.

They said that they have their own way of protecting their environment and that they are already committed with the Micronesia Challenge, which was a brainchild of outgoing President Tommy Remengesau with the aim to preserve 30 percent of near shore waters by 2020.

The Friends of the Monument said they have praise for the local officials who worked with the White House on the designation.

"Our leaders in the Executive Branch and the Legislature Branch have worked tirelessly on this issue. After the very large public meeting back in October there were lots of conversations going back and forth between Saipan and Washington and from what I have heard the monument we are going to get on Tuesday is something that addresses most if not all of our local leaders' concerns. They are to be commended for doing their job," said Angelo Villagomez, co-founder of Beautify CNMI.

GUAM

From Page 1

least $15 billion—with Japan footing more than $6 billion of the bill—and put some of the U.S. military's highest-profile assets within the fences of a vastly improved network of bases.

The newcomers will find an island already peppered with strip malls, fast-food franchises and high-rise hotels serving Japanese tourists who want a closer-to-home version of Hawaii. The plans for the base are fueling a fresh construction and real estate boom which Guam hopes will accelerate its prosperity.

But Guam is smaller than some Hawaiian islands, with a population of just 155,000, and many of its officials are worried that the military influx could leave the island's infrastructure—water, highways, and seaport—overwhelmed and underfunded.

Felix Camacho, the elected Republican governor of the U.S. territory, says he believes in the long run the troop influx will be "tremendous" for Guam's economy, but it will be "a difficult and complex process."

"I remain hopeful," he said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Our challenge is that we know that the Department of Defense and Japan will build a first-rate base." But Guam has "limited capacity" to develop its own infrastructure to absorb the influx, he said.

Joe Murphy, in a recent editorial in the *Pacific Daily News*, Guam's main newspaper, focused on the upside.

"The shift of Marines may cause problems," he wrote, but "Transportation should get better. Our nightclubs should get better. So should our restaurants and movie theaters. It all should trigger an advancement in the social scene on Guam. This is a new era, and we've got to move forward."

However, the whole plan could collapse if Japan fails to build a replacement for a busy Marine Corps air base on its southern island of Okinawa—a festering issue that one senior U.S. military official acknowledged is fraught with difficulties.

The buildup plan, to be carried out by 2014, represents a major realignment of U.S. forces in the Pacific:

■ About 8,000 Marines are to be shifted 1,200 miles southeast, from Okinawa to Guam, making it the Corps' second largest permanent overseas staging and training area.

■ The Navy has already deployed three nuclear-powered submarines to Guam and is seeking improvements to accommodate the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS *George Washington*, which carries about 5,000 sailors and airmen.

■ The Army wants to deploy a ballistic missile defense task force, which would bring roughly 630 soldiers and 1,000 dependents to Guam.

-Long-range B-2 bombers have begun regularly deploying to Guam, along with squadrons of F-16 fighters. Military planners are considering bringing in the new F-22 fighters as well—though details remain sketchy—along with Global Hawk unmanned surveillance aircraft and a dozen tankers.

The buildup is designed in large part to ease the long-standing over-concentration of forces on Okinawa, the U.S. military's key Pacific outpost since the 1950s, without pulling them back too far from such potential flash points as Taiwan and North Korea.

Although China and Russia, the U.S.'s main rivals in the Pacific, have been quiet, North Korea is characteristically wary. In an editorial, the state-run *Minju Joson* newspaper said it was meant to enable the Pentagon "to carry out its strategy for a surprise pre-emptive attack."

But keeping the Marines at their present levels on Okinawa has become unrealistic.

By treaty with Tokyo, more than 50,000 U.S. troops are stationed throughout Japan, which pays billions of dollars each year to support them, more than any other country with a U.S. base on its territory.

Okinawans have long complained that their crowded island has to absorb too much of the presence, and of the crimes and other misbehavior of U.S. personnel stationed there. More than half of the U.S. troops in Japan are on Okinawa, as is Kadena, the biggest U.S. air base in the region.

In U.S.-Japanese negotiations, Guam has emerged as the most practical alternative.

Okinawans have generally welcomed the move, and Tokyo has pledged to invest nearly $3 billion in building barracks, offices and other facilities for the troops on Guam, and to lend another $3.3 billion for developing supporting infrastructure.

Roughly 10,000 Marines are to stay on Okinawa, however, and Tokyo has run into serious opposition in trying to move the Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to a less congested part of Okinawa. Many Okinawans want it off the island altogether.

Lt. Gen. Edward Rice, commander of the U.S. forces in Japan, says the whole move to Guam depends on Futenma getting new premises on Okinawa.

"There are serious and significant challenges that remain for us to facilitate the transfer," he said at a news conference in Tokyo.

'Hotel industry better in 2008 than in 2007'

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The hotel industry performed a tad better in 2008 compared to a devastating year in 2007, according to Lynn Knight, president and chairwoman of the board of the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands.

Knight, who was recently re-elected for another two-year term, said Japanese and Korean tourism activities picked up a bit.

She said that the Russian market doubled because the tourists from Russia were worried that they might not come by next year so they were taking their chances.

HANMI is also anticipating an influx of visitors from the huge China market.

Knight said this market looks pretty well and HANMI is hoping to hold on all the current flights to the islands "but it always depends on the flight schedules whether we can keep the market the same size."

She said they are also worried about not only in the tourism market but also in the possible reduction in some service.

The service from Northwest Airlines, which increased tourism from Japan and Korea, Knight said, was a major factor in 2008.

Earlier, Mustafa Issa, general manager of Palms Resort Saipan made an initial analysis on the effects of the global economic slowdown saying that the tourists will definitely opt to a nearer place like Saipan due to its proximity to Asia because of lesser costs and time.

Guam, Hawaii and Bali, Indonesia, and other tropical destinations in Asia are Saipan's main tourism competitors.

Another issue that the hotel industry is currently facing is the anticipation of the upcoming federalization of CNMI immigration and the continued increase on minimum wage level.

Knight said hotel managements are worried about their employees, whether they could keep the same level of quality service.

"Would we be able to keep it and enjoy and how are we going to afford these uncertainties. This is something that we're worried about," she said.

Knight said the cooperation of the government would boost the business sector.

"I would say that right now there is a very good dialogue. We have an open communication with the administration and with the Legislature," Knight said.

She said that the one thing that concerns the hotel industry is the issue of raising taxes and the plan to remove the rebates.

She said that, in the U.S. the private sector is asking the government for bailout in the CNMI.

She said it appears that the government is asking the private sector for a bailout.

Knight added that HANMI is opposed to any increase in taxes.

"We hope that the government becomes more efficient and do some downsizing wherever is necessary," Knight said.

She said the economy has shrunk and the government needs to match the size of the economy and "we realized it's very hard to do."

She said the economic downturn happened very fast but the government needs to look anywhere for efficiency rather than taxing the industry that is putting food on the table.

"We think that they really should look into their cost cutting," she said.

So in order to prepare for the upcoming federalization, HANMI is working closely with the government and the Legislature.

It is also looking forward with working closely with the new Representative-elect Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan on some of these issues.

"There's a lot of work to be done with the executive branch in the U.S. because there are five federal agencies that are in the regulations and we will be implementing them. So we continue whatever we can do to help and iron out all the little details," Knight said.

This would mean, Knight said, talking to these federal agencies a lot and helping them to understand what the difficulties are then trying to find ways to smooth things out.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

HANMI board chairwoman Lynn Knight, second left, joins other hotel general managers in serving food to the *man'amko* during a special holiday luncheon last week.

Murder suspect, another juvenile detainee, escape from detention, but later return

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Two juvenile detainees, including one of the three suspects in the murder of a security guard at the Marianas High School, reportedly escaped from their detention cells at the Kagman Juvenile Detention Facility on New Year's Day, but returned later to the facility.

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Santiago Tudela confirmed to *Saipan Tribune* that Edward Blas and another male juvenile escaped from the Juvenile Detention Facility on Thursday midnight.

Tudela said initial report showed that Blas and the other juvenile went back to the detention facility the following morning apparently because they were hungry and thirsty.

The commissioner said he had no information how the two managed to escape from the facility.

Tudela said the Juvenile Detention is not under the jurisdiction of DPS.

Blas is only 16 years old, but the Attorney General's Office charged him as an adult in connection with the murder of Efren Ballesteros.

Blas and two other teenagers—Eric Rabauliman and Randy Igisomare—are being charged over the killing and robbing Ballesteros during a burglary at MHS in Susupe last Nov. 17 or 18. The three pleaded not guilty.

ON KALABERA CAVE DEVELOPMENT

Environmental assessment to be completed this month

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Herman B. Cabrera of consulting firm Herman B. Cabreara and Associates stresses a point during Wednesday's public hearing for the proposed Kalabera Cave development project. Coordinator Roman Demapan was the moderator during the hearing at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in San Roque.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The consulting firm for the project to develop Kalabera Cave into an environmentally friendly and accessible tourist destination is set to finish its impact assessment report this month.

Consultant Herman B. Cabrera and Associates presented its initial Environment Assessment report for the proposed project during a public hearing on New Year's Eve attended by about 40 people at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in San Roque.

In response to a comment why the public hearing is scheduled at a time when all the people are busy preparing to welcome the New Year, Cabrera said they needed to meet with the deadline.

Project coordinator Roman Demapan said they have already completed 30 percent of their EA and that the hearing is to gather comments that are important and "will become a matter of public record."

Comment forms were distributed to those who attended the hearing. The deadline for submission of public comments had been set on Jan. 15. Comments maybe submitted at the Joeten Kiyu Public Library in Susupe and at the office of the Department of Public Works Technical Service Building.

The document is also available online at http://www.4shared.com/file71965523/cf2d2551/EA_Report_for_Kalabera_Cave_30_Submital.html or contact 670-234-1778 or email hbc@saipan.com.

Representatives from various government agencies and sub-consultants were also present to update the public on what they have accomplished so far at the site.

The sub-consultants include Swift and Harper Archeological Resource Consulting, Allied Pacific Environmental Services, Inc., Genevieve Cabrera, Dan Wooster and Castro and Associates.

The government agencies that are part of the project preparation are DPW, Division of Fish and Wild Life, Department of Public Lands, Historic Preservation Office, Department of Environmental Quality, and Coastal Resources Management.

Ed Arriola, chair of Marianas Visitors Authority's Destination and Enhancement Committee, was also present to explain their role on the proposed improvement project.

He said his committee's objective is to identify new projects, and one of these is the Kalabera Cave development project.

The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Interior through the Office of Insular Affairs.

DPW is the implementing agency.

According to an overview report, the purpose of such a project is to address the need to develop one of Saipan's historical, archeological and geological treasures into a leading tourist attraction and contribute to the expansion of tourist arrivals to the CNMI.

It said that the overall long-term goal is to provide a safe, economical, attractive and least invasive development that would contribute economic and educational development with within the tourist and local market.

The improvements to be made will include construction of parking spaces, landscaping, entrance-road access toward the cave, gift shop and snack bar, restroom, and handicap access.

Other specific improvement works to be done will be perimeter lighting, cave interior stairways and lighting, ventilation system, and signage.

Consultant: Report on Kalabera Cave parking space misleading

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Herman B. Cabrera, project consultant for the Kalabera Cave development initiative, has denied having issued any statement that a parking space for tour buses, vans, and cars would be 8,000 square meters of public lands.

During a public hearing for the project on Dec. 31 at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in San Roque, Cabrera said the recent newspaper report (not in the *Saipan Tribune*) is totally misleading.

The proposed parking space would accommodate only 14 cars at the same time while a bus parking area would accommodate only four.

A proposed pathway or nature's trail-way will be incorporated from the parking space to the main entrance to the cave, which is estimated 250 feet long.

Cabrera said they want the project to be as natural as possible, including the landscaping.

He said the least invasive construction and installation methods would be practiced for maximum preservation of the natural and historical state of the area.

The proposed project is located at an undeveloped area near the northeastern coast of Saipan, approximately a mile south of the Bird Island overlook.

The current site location is on a public land, within the Marpi Commonwealth Forest and contains valuable historical, cultural and archeological material.

The site is between the unimproved Kingfisher Route (Route 36) and the near vertical cliff where the actual cave is located.

The entrance road is approximately 500 feet long that connects the main road to the cave.

The access road slopes gently upward towards the cave.

Although, construction of parking spaces would be done, the reported 8,000 square meters would be too much.

Other facilities to be constructed would be gift shop and snack bar, restroom and handicap access, perimeter lighting, a resting house, Japanese house prayer, pictograph and petroglyph interpretive, and others.

The purpose is to preserve the geological aspect of the cave.

Cabrera said they have visited the area two months ago and found a lot of graffiti.

"We're losing our culture. If we don't restore, we can't preserve the culture. That's why we are working with people with different professions. We don't want to build a modern building but we want to make the area as pristine as possible," Cabrera said.

Hard Rock greets 2009 with a bang

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Staff and guests of Hard Rock Café, led by assistant general manager Aldwin Culiat, join the Frozen Nipple band on stage during the New Year countdown.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hard Rock Café greeted 2009 with a bang as partygoers jammed its New Year's countdown event at the close of last year.

Aldwin Culiat, Hard Rock's assistant general manager, estimated the turnout to be over 150 people.

"It was really a success. Although it was a soft re-launching our guests, that included families of our suppliers, enjoyed the night," Culiat said.

He said they will definitely make a better preparation next time—more promotion, more awareness, and more exciting raffle prizes.

Culiat said PTI came up in the last minute to donate a cellular phone for the raffle draw.

The countdown was spiced-up by entertainment from homegrown talents including the Frozen Nipple band, and a the masquerade show featuring the Final Xtreme, the runner-up in the CNMI's best dance crew competition.

"Parents and children as well as the tourists spent their time enjoying the quality food we prepared for them," Culiat said.

Hard Rock distributed glasses of champagne for the adult guests to welcome 2009 with a toast and a loud cheer amid all the much louder fireworks outside.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
One of the young guests at Hard Rock Café's New Year countdown blows her horn.

'New Year's Day celebration went well'

DPS shuts down two firecracker vendors

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

New Year's Day celebration in the CNMI was generally peaceful as the Department of Public Safety did not receive report of any serious injuries related to firecrackers or fireworks.

"Except with the San Vicente robbery, everything went well during New Year's Day celebration," according to DPS Commissioner Santiago Tudela.

Tudela, however, disclosed that he shutdown the operations of roadside vendors selling firecrackers and fireworks at two locations on Saipan due to improper permit.

With respect to the number of persons arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol during Christmas and New Year's Day celebrations, DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said she will release the information by today, Monday.

Tudela said he closed the operation of a firecrackers vendor in front of X.O. Market in Gualo Rai and the other vendor near Payless Store in Chalan Kanoa.

The vendors, he said, were not arrested.

"It's like a business, when you obtained a business license for an establishment, you cannot make a Xerox copy of the permit and open two more," Tudela said.

He noted that, unlike in the previous years when a lot of people suffered injuries related to firecrackers, this time no injuries were reported during Christmas and New Year's Day celebrations.

"We restricted the big and powerful firecrackers. We did not allow those to be on sale," the commissioner said.

He said he signed the permit only for the small firecrackers.

"For me I support the total ban of the firecrackers. Fireworks should also be supervised by fire personnel," Tudela said.

He said every November there is a one container of firecrackers and fireworks that would arrive on the island coming from China.

The commissioner said he will lobby for the passage of a law that will prohibit the shipment of firecrackers to the CNMI.

DFS' Beighley to keynote Chamber installation dinner

Chamber announces nominees for Businessperson of the Year

The annual Saipan Chamber of Commerce Installation Dinner will be held this year at the Fiesta Resort & Spa's Hibiscus Hall on the evening of Saturday, Jan. 10, 2008 at 6pm.

The evening's keynote speaker will be Jim Beighley, Managing Director of the Pacific Division of DFS, the world's leading luxury retailer catering to the traveling public.

Beighley

Each year, the Chamber announces the recipient of its Businessperson of the Year award at the Installation Dinner.

This year's nominees are: Kathryn Barry, Regional Marketing Manager of PTI/IT&E; Lawrence Knecht, Executive Vice President-CFO of PTI/IT&E; Lynn Knight, Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Tan Holdings, Publisher of the *Saipan Tribune*, and General Manager of Century Hotel; Anthony Pellegrino, owner and operator of Saipan Sea Ventures, Saipan Ice & Water Co., and Saipan Aquaculture; and Kanae Quinn, Director of Sales & Marketing at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

Nominees must be residents of Saipan and members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce. A panel of past recipients evaluates nominees on the basis of criteria such as community involvement, contributions to the community, support for local workforce, and participation in the Chamber. Past recipients include: K.J. Kim of Asiana Airlines, Juan Guerrero of Juan T. Guerrero & Associates, David M. Sablan, Sr. of Century Insurance, Mark Erwin of Continental Airlines, Jerry Tan of Tan Holdings, Alex Sablan of Saipan Shipping, Jay Jones of Triple J Enterprises, Wendi Herring of Pacific Islands Club, Marian Aldan-Pierce of DFS, Joe Ayuyu of McDonald's, Ed Camacho of The Financial & Insurance Services Group, and Efrain Camacho of EFC Engineers & Architects.

The evening will include a five-course plated dinner, musical entertainment by the award-winning Pacific Winds ensemble, and a silent auction, the proceeds of which will benefit the Chamber's Educational Scholarship Fund.

Last year, the silent auction raised over $4,000, which helped enable the Chamber to award six $1,500 scholarships to deserving college-bound high school seniors from Saipan. This year, the Chamber has committed to also funding two scholarships to the Northern Marianas Trades Institute, in recognition of the important role this new vocational school will play in helping our local workforce retool in response to the changing demands of both the public and private sectors.

Entrance to the Installation Dinner is $50 per person and reservations must be made in advance by calling the Chamber office at 233-7150.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has approximately 150 members, ranging from individuals and small companies to some of the largest companies in the Pacific region.

The Chamber regularly appears before and works with government agencies, elected officials, and other business and civic organizations to improve the business climate and economic and civic development of our islands. The Chamber not only promotes and protects business interests, but also works to promote the civic interests and general health and welfare of the Commonwealth community as a whole. Aside from serving as an advocate for the business community, the Chamber annually awards college scholarship funds to deserving Commonwealth high school seniors; members have collectively hosted hundreds of visiting military personnel through the Invite-a-Sailor program; and its forums and workshops have educated and informed thousands of members and non-members on diverse topics that affect our businesses, our economy, and our community. ***(PR)***

SAN ANTONIO BEACH CLEANUP CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood Jr. High School My Wave Student Club and employees from Pacific Islands Club picked up 380 lbs. of debris during their cleanup at San Antonio Beach Park last Jan 3, 2009. They are joined in this photo by Division of Environmental Quality representatives.

NMC info session set tonight

Participants to receive fee waivers

In addition to receiving assistance in filling application and financial aid forms, those who attend the Northern Marianas College's Free Info Session today, Jan. 5, will also qualify to receive a waiver of the application and placement test fees for the Spring 2009 semester. The waivers represent a savings of up to $75.

The free Mini Info Session provides those who are interested in furthering their education and advancing their professional careers an opportunity to learn about the programs and services offered at the College.

At the session, current college students will be sharing their experiences, and representatives from different degree and certificate programs, as well as counseling, financial aid and admissions staff will be on hand to answer questions.

The free session will be held on Jan. 5, 2009, in Room D-1 at the College's As Terlaje campus, from 5:30pm to 7pm.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in elementary education, associate degrees in business, liberal arts, nursing, natural resource management, criminal justice, hospitality management, and more. Moreover, it offers certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

The event is open to everyone, including graduating seniors and their parents, government and private sector employees, international students, and members of the general public who are interested in learning more about the programs at NMC. ***(PR)***

Red Cross health and safety training dates

The American Red Cross announces the following health and safety training for the month of January 2009:

- Lifeguard Swim Test: Jan. 10, Saturday.
- Adult CPR: Jan. 17, Saturday, 8am-12pm.
- First Aid: Jan/ 17, Saturday, 1pm-5pm.

The training fee for Adult CPR and First Aid is $30 per person/per course. A participants booklet is required for the class. The booklet is $5. The lifeguard swim test is free.

If you have any questions or would like to register for a class please call our office at 234-3459 or via email redcross@vzpacifica.net.

In related news, families of service members in the U.S. Armed Forces have until Jan. 9, Friday to get the addresses of your loved ones to the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter. Packages will be mailed on Monday, Jan. 12. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB09-CDD-036

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2009 • TIME: 11:30 A.M.

"JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **PAMELA C. SABLAN**
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-033

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 03, 2009 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"PURCHASE OF THREE (3) VENTILATOR SYSTEM FOR THE RESPIRATORY UNITY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATION FOR CNMI WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

The Antidegradation Policy of the Water Quality Standards of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands states that the protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters of the Commonwealth are an historic and legal right of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, and that this shall be the public policy of the Commonwealth. Any proposed activity that will impact the waters of the Commonwealth must receive a Water Quality Certification from the Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ). In issuing a Water Quality Certification, DEQ must assure that the proposed activity complies with all applicable provisions of the CNMI Water Quality Standards and federal Clean Water Act, will not interfere with the attainment or maintenance of the existing or designated uses of the Commonwealth waters, and that all appropriate and practicable steps have been taken to minimize potential adverse impacts to aquatic life and human health.

Upon receiving an application, DEQ issues a public notification which describes the proposed activity and potential impacts on water quality, aquatic life and human health. A thirty (30) day public comment period will commence from the date of the first publication of the notice.

The Director of DEQ may conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the application if a hearing is requested by the public. DEQ will make a determination for issuing a Water Quality Certification based upon a complete technical review of the application and the public comments received.

DEQ is soliciting comments on the following application for a CNMI Water Quality Certification.

1. APPLICANT: CNMI Department of Public Works
Mr. Diego Songsong, Secretary
Joeten Gualo Rai Center
Saipan, MP 96950

2. APPLICABLE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: CNMI Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act (Public Law No. 3-23); CNMI Water Quality Standards, Parts 3 and 10 (Commonwealth Register Vol. 26 No. 09, September 24, 2004).

3. LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: Puerto Rico Dump, located in the Puerto Rico area of Saipan, CNMI.

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: The project is comprised of two main components: (1) land clearing, subsequent topographical re-sculpturing of the dump site to final design elevations; installation of a HDPE geomembrane "cap"; and re-planting the site with grass for use as a passive public park, and (2) construction of a rock rip-rap shoreline protection structure along the northwest and southwest sides of the dump site that border Saipan Lagoon.

5. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed rock rip-rap shoreline protection structure would potentially cover an estimated 96,350 ft2 area of marine habitats. Affected marine habitats that may be affected along the south west side include: inter-tidal mudflats (0.24 acres); Enhalus seagrass (0.002 acres); mangrove wetland (0.1 acres) and shallow sandy bottom habitat (0.99 acres). Marine habitats found fronting the dump's northwest boundary were comprised of coral communities (9 genera) and scattered algae species. Construction related activities will kill non-mobile or slow moving organisms. Once construction is completed, however, an overall improvement to water quality within the harbor and adjacent lagoon areas is expected due the effect of the cap (HDPE liner) significantly reducing the quantity of leachate that is generated and discharged from the dump.

6. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES: Silt curtains will be utilized to minimize the spread of the sediment plume. The applicant will monitor water quality as required by the certification, if issued, to ensure proper operation of the silt curtains. The recently promulgated (April 2008) required compensatory mitigation plans {FR 73(70)} will be developed in coordination with local and federal agencies and implemented in accordance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit, if issued. The applicant will work with DEQ during the project to identify any other reasonable mitigative measures that may become necessary.

Written comments and inquires should be submitted to DEQ within thirty (30) days of the first date of publication of this notice. Please mail comments to Director, Division of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950.

Coke spreads holiday spirit to first-time winners

GUALO RAI—"Believe and you shall receive."

First time and top prize winner Marilou Paet said that this personal belief that she would win a laptop for her daughter enabled her to gain the top prize at the first drawing for Coca-Cola's "Spread the Spirit" promo.

Her daughter, Victoria Aldan, an 18-year-old education student at Northern Marianas College, has been longing for a laptop to help with her studies. Paet considered her prize as a wonderful Christmas present for her daughter.

"From the time I bought Coke on Thanksgiving and put my entry in the drop box, I told myself that I was going to win that laptop for my daughter," Paet said. "When Coke called me at work and informed me that I won, I thanked God and jumped for joy. I was so excited that I found myself slapping the back of one of my customers!"

Paet, a staff at one of the catering companies on island, has never left Saipan, since she set foot on the island 20 years ago and has never changed her favorite drink, Coke. She said that Coke is the brand of choice for her family, although they each have a preferred drink: Marilou likes Coke, Victoria goes for Paradise Sun, and Marilou's 14-year-old son, Christian Villanueva favors Coke Cherry.

Like Paet, all the other winning entrants to the Coca-Cola "Spread the Spirit" promo are first-time winners.

Roel Cabacungan said that he was happy to win an overnight stay with meals at Aqua Resort Club. Since he is single, he said that he would look for a date.

Williemae Castro, another winner of the Aqua Resort Club gift certificate, said that she would treat her family of five, which includes a baby.

Andrea Duenas, who won a Six-Foot Subway sandwich, said she would use the giant sandwich to party with her children. She said that Coke Classic was her favorite beverage.

Mitsue Restaurant owner Kazu Matsumoto said that he regularly bought two to three cases of Sprite, Coke, and Nestea every week. The self-confessed Nestea fanatic was the other winner of a Six-Foot Subway Sandwich.

Augusto Santos was not only a first-time winner; he was also a first-time owner of a cellular phone. "I'm happy that I won the iConnect 425 cell phone with a free phone card because I never had a cell phone before," said the mechanic.

Arlene Bercero won a gift certificate for four with brunch to Saipan World Resort's Wave Jungle. She said that she would take her husband and their 10-month old son as well as a friend to enjoy a day at the water park as a foursome.

Two other winners Donovan Pangelinan, a student and another winner of iConnect 425 cell phone with prepaid phone card, and Riza Cano, a homemaker and also a winner of a gift certificate to Saipan World Resort did not make it to the awarding of prizes.

The Coca-Cola Spread the Spirit promo is an expression of the "Coke Side of Holiday." It ran until Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2008. The Grand Drawing was held on Jan. 2, 2009 from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at Joeten Shopping Center in Susupe. A Yamaha XT 225 Motorcycle provided in part by Joeten Motor Company Inc. with $500 in Shell V-Power fuel awaited the grand prize winner. The baby grand prize was a PGO Metro "Buddy" Scooter and $500 in Shell V-Power fuel. An Acer Aspire One Laptop sponsored in part by Megabyte was intended for the first prize winner.

Other prizes included three Six-Foot Subway Sandwiches, three iConnect i425 cellular phones with prepaid phone cards, three gift certificates from Aqua Resort Club for an overnight stay for four with meals, and three gift certificates from Saipan World Resort for a day at the Wave Jungle water park for four with meals.

The grand drawing coincided with a live remote broadcast by Power 99. Coca-Cola Beverage Company (Micronesia), Inc, gave away exciting prizes to grand drawing games participants.

Coca-Cola®, Coke® Cherry, and Sprite® are brands of The Coca-Cola Company, the world's largest beverage company. NESTEA® is a Nestlé brand, licensed by The Coca-Cola Company. Coca-Cola North America markets NESTEA® ready-to-drink iced tea in the U.S. Coca-Cola North America is a unit of The Coca-Cola Company, the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with more than 450 sparkling and still brands. Along with Coca-Cola®, recognized as the world's most valuable brand, the Company markets four of the world's top five soft drink brands, including Diet Coke®, Fanta® and Sprite®, and a wide range of other beverages, including diet and light soft drinks, waters, juices and juice drinks, teas, coffees and sports drinks. Through the world's largest distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy the Company's beverages at a rate exceeding one billion servings each day. For more information about The Coca-Cola Company, please visit our website at www.coca-colacompany.com and www.kospn.com. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Williemae Castro accepts her Coca-Cola Spread the Spirit gift certificate for an overnight stay for four with meals at Aqua Resort Club from Rusty M. Loyola, operations manager of Coca-Cola Beverage Company (Micronesia), Inc.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Arlene Bercero is presented with a Coca-Cola Spread the Spirit gift certificate for four with meals at Saipan World Resort's Wave Jungle by Rusty M. Loyola, operations manager of Coca-Cola Beverage Company (Micronesia), Inc.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Augusto Santos is the happy recipient of an iConnect 425 cellular phone with free phone card. This is his first time to own a cellular phone and Coca-Cola's Spread the Spirit promo is the first promo where he won. Presenting him with the prize is Rusty M. Loyola, operations manager of Coca-Cola Beverage Company (Micronesia), Inc.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marilou Paet, first prize winner of the Coca-Cola Spread the Spirit promo, receives her laptop from Rusty M. Loyola, operations manager of Coca-Cola Beverage Company (Micronesia), Inc.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 5, 1999

Continental sees 3% fall in arrivals as Japan falters

Continental Micronesia has projected a three percent decline in Japanese traffic in Micronesia and Hawaii as the Japanese economy remains in the dump. Japan, the world's second largest economy, plunged in deepest recession since World War II after the collapse of the speculative "bubble" economy in the late 1980s. Wally Dias, staff vice president for sales and promotions, said the airline has no plan to add flights or new routes in Micronesia and Asia as consumer confidence remains weak. "We're just hoping it won't go down further so that we can just fill up the current capacity," said Dias.

$100K deposit shouldn't be kept idle: Reyes

House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Karl T. Reyes yesterday stressed the need to ease the requirement on the $100,000 security deposit imposed on foreign investments in the wake of the plan to establish the first free trade zone in the Northern Marianas. He said the cash bond should be converted into more tangible investments, such as an additional capital money for business expansion, in what may serve as another incentive to attract potential investors into the commonwealth. While the House has approved a measure removing the cash requirement, the Senate has yet to tackle the proposal despite urgent calls from the business sector to hasten its passage.

JANUARY 5, 2001

Workers ordered to support claims

U.S. District Judge Alex R. Munson has ordered garment factory workers suing their employers on Saipan to back allegations they were forced to pay recruitment fees in order to work on the island. He granted partly the two motions filed by garment manufacturers seeking to dismiss and strike the claims from the $1 billion class-action lawsuit. In his ruling issued the other day, the federal judge gave "one last opportunity" for the plaintiffs—who are unnamed guest workers employed by the local garment industry—to file an amended complaint within 20 days.

DLNR extends Pohnpei food ban

Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Joaquin A. Tenorio has extended for the seventh month since June last year the emergency order of quarantine banning the entry of food products from Pohnpei in light of a cholera epidemic in the Micronesian island. In an official order released yesterday, Dr. Tenorio warned that the risk posed by food originating from Pohnpei is potentially greater than the risk presented by food items imported from other FSM states. "There is currently a vibrio cholera epidemic in Pohnpei and it is important that the health of the people of the Commonwealth be protected," the DLNR chief stated.

JANUARY 5, 2003

Govt: Action-filled 2003

Gov. Juan N. Babauta gathered members of his Cabinet early this week to set goals for 2003-a time that the chief executive anticipates to be "probably the most defining year of his administration," his public information officer said Friday. Peter Callaghan, the administration's spokesperson, said that Cabinet members were encouraged to think of ways to reduce costs and increase revenues. "He wants cooperation and support from all his Cabinet members to address the serious issues faced by the Commonwealth. He described 2002 as probably the worst year we've ever had economically.

Budget requests due on Jan. 31

The Office of Management and Budget has handed down the budget call, asking government agencies to work on their appropriations requests for fiscal year 2004, with the deadline set for January 31, 2003. Public agencies are not bound by any specified budget ceiling but OMB underscored that revenue projections for FY2004 are anticipated to be close, if not lower than, the current levels. "With this in mind, agencies are asked to limit their budget request to ensure basic and core delivery of public services only, and not more, unless critically needed," OMB stressed.

Gold's Gym launches 2009 Body Success Challenge

Over $10,000 in cash and prizes to be awarded

Gold's Gym Saipan announced today that it has just launched the CNMI's 2009 Body Success Challenge and there will be over $10,000 in cash and prizes to be awarded to participants from the community that can lose the most weight as a percentage of their original starting weight and/or make the most amazing body transformation over a three-month period.

Registration is $100 per person and will be open to anyone, age 16 and above, who lives in the CNMI. Based upon the success of the first Body Success Challenge that took place during the Summer of 2008, Gold's Gym has now increased the number of competition categories and more than doubled the amount of cash and prize awards with the help of a growing list co-sponsors including Shell Marianas, Coca-Cola, Subway, Foremost, Michelob Ultra, and Fiji water.

The 2008 Body Success Challenge had 44 participants who entered and 29 who finished, resulting in a total combined weight loss of 695 lbs. The winners included men's champion, Jack Kiyoshi, who lost 58 lbs and 23 percent of his overall body weight; women's champion, Fe Mamuyac, who lost 38 lbs. and 25 percent of her overall body weight, and the Most Amazing Body Transformation Champion, Jeff Boyer, who lost 20 lbs., 11 percent of his overall body weight, and 39 percent of his overall body fat.

According to Josephine Togawa, co-owner of Gold's Gym Saipan, the goal of the 2009 Body Success Challenge is to have a combined weight loss of at least 1,000 lbs by all the competitors who complete the three-month challenge. Instead of only having one men's weight loss category and one women's weight loss category, the 2009 Body Success Challenge will offer the following four weight loss competition categories: 1) women ages 16 to 29 years old; 2) men ages 16 to 29 years old; 3) women ages 30 and above; and 4) men ages 30 and above; plus an overall "Most Amazing Body Transformation" category that will be open to all men and women who are either trying to lose weight and body fat or gain size and muscle.

Eligibility

- You do NOT have to be a Gold's Gym member to participate;
- You must be at least 16 years of age with a parent's consent if under 18;
- You must be able to provide proof of CNMI residency (Saipan, Rota, or Tinian);
- You must complete and submit a registration form to Gold's Gym no later than 6pm on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009; and
- You must complete the final weigh-in on the prescribed dates and no later than three months after your initial weigh-in.

The registration period for the 2009 Body Success Challenge will commence on Monday, Jan. 5, at Gold's Gym Saipan and will run through Saturday, Jan. 31. Registration forms will only be available at the Gold's Gym front desk. Competitors will have exactly three (3) months from their initial weigh-in date (which includes body circumference measurements and "before" photos") to complete the Challenge and do a final weigh-in, measurements, and "after" photos.

Body Success Challenge prizes

1st place (all 4 weight loss categories) = $1,000 cash and a free 1-year membership at Gold's Gym;

2nd place (all 4 weight loss categories) = $500 cash and a free 6-month membership at Gold's Gym; and

Most Amazing Body Transformation = $500 cash and a free 3-month membership at Gold's Gym.

According to Gold's Gym co-owner, Eric Plinske, there is also a plan to offer optional weekly weigh-in challenges and weekly group exercise activities for cash and prizes, which would all start in February after all participants have registered before the Jan. 31 deadline.

Gold's Gym membership incentive

You do not have to be a Gold's Gym member to enter the Body Success Challenge, but Gold's Gym is currently offering a waived enrollment fee (regularly $99) and your first week FREE as a major incentive to join Gold's Gym now so that you will have access to all the resources and extra help you may need to win the Challenge, including unlimited free access to daily group exercise classes, more than 10,000 ft² of cardio and weight training equipment, and FREE weekly workout orientation sessions with a certified trainer, to name a few. There will be a FREE Body Success Challenge information session at Gold's Gym, located at Garapan Central Park, this Saturday morning (Jan. 10) at 10am, and all members of the community who are interested in entering the competition are welcome to attend.

For more details about the 2009 Body Success Challenge or how to register, contact Gold's Gym at 233-4000, email goldsgym@saipan.com or visit Gold's Gym located at Garapan Central Park on Kopa Di Oru Street. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Jack Kiyoshi lost 58 lbs. and 23 percent of his overall body weight to emerge as men's champion of the 2008 Body Success Challenge. Above are his "before" and "after" photos.

EX-SAIPAN RESIDENTS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Former Saipan residents gather for a photo during their get-together Christmas party on Christmas Day held at the residence of Lani and Ferdie Santos in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

NEW YEAR IN CANADA

Former Calvary Christian Academy's student Krystele Anne Chavez, center, pose for the camera with her friends during the New Year's countdown party at the Fleetwood International Church in Surrey, B.C.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Protection for smokers

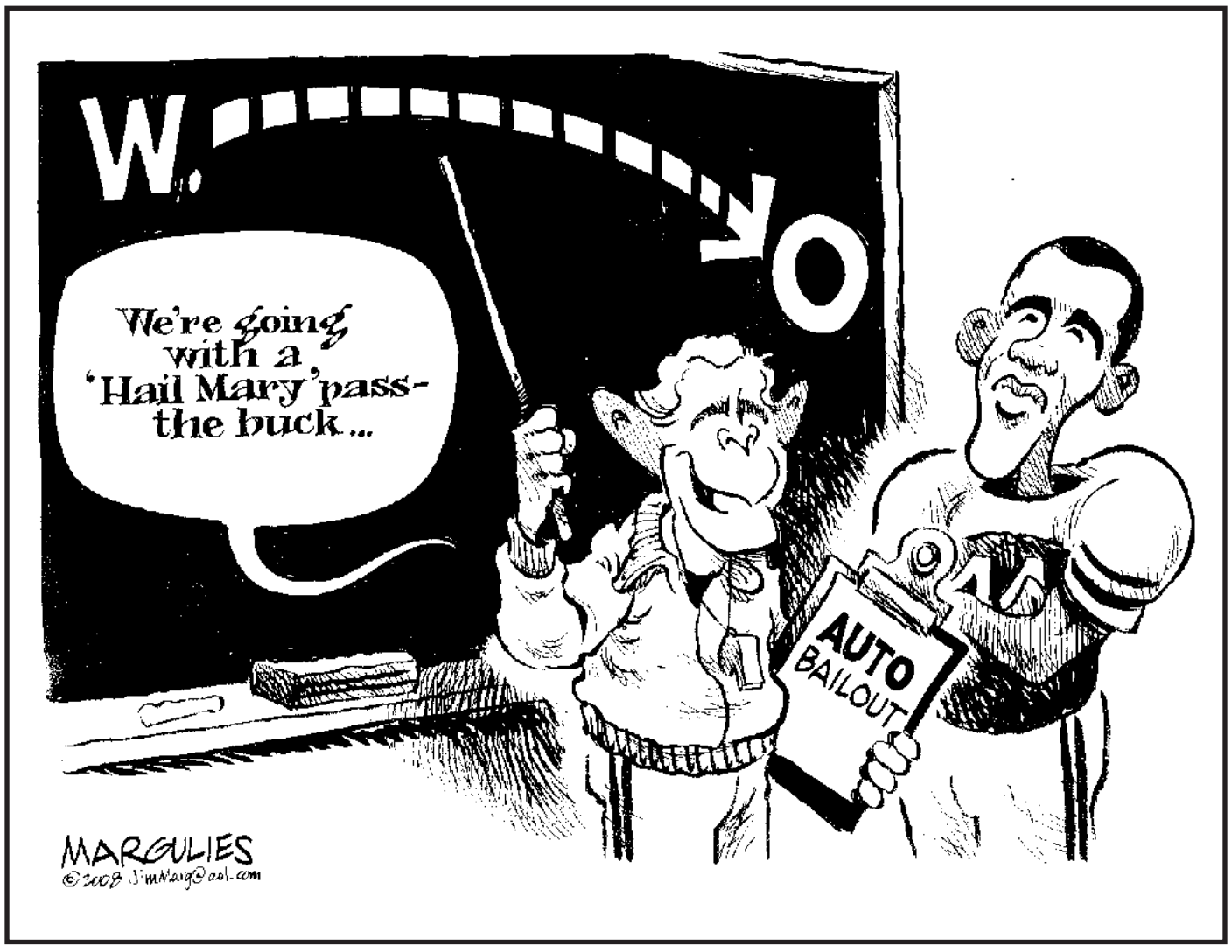
Even Barack Obama—he of the compulsive exercise regimen and workout- video-worthy physique—hasn't been able to escape the clutches of nicotine. The president-elect, whose struggle to give up cigarettes is well documented, still sneaks an occasional smoke. That cigarettes can ensnare someone as disciplined as Obama speaks to their potency. It is inconceivable, then, that the most deadly product legally sold in the United States is exempt from federal regulation. (Meanwhile, the Food and Drug Administration oversees dog food, perfume and, yes, nicotine gum.) The new Congress should pass legislation that would give the FDA authority to regulate Big Tobacco.

For too long, cigarette makers have decided what's safe for consumers. Their concern for the health of smokers—or lack thereof—has led them to disguise the dangers of their products with labels such as "light" and "low tar," and to lure young smokers by peddling candy-flavored cigarettes. The proposed legislation would eliminate such misleading labels and severely curtail Big Tobacco's ability to market to youths. The legislation would also require tobacco companies to disclose the ingredients in their products and place larger warning labels on cigarette packs. Most significant, it would give the FDA the latitude to take further steps to curb addiction, such as requiring the removal of harmful additives.

Opponents say that the legislation would overburden the FDA and trick smokers into thinking that cigarettes are approved by the agency. In fact, the bill would impose a fee on cigarette makers to fund a separate center within the FDA to oversee Big Tobacco. The bill would also prohibit cigarette makers from claiming that their products are "FDA-approved." Some critics say the bill is racially biased because it doesn't ban menthol-flavored cigarettes, which are preferred by about three-fourths of African American smokers. But the legislation wouldn't prevent the FDA from taking such action, and its restrictions on marketing would only help stamp out the popularity of flavored cigarettes.

The proposed economic stimulus bill will be Congress' top priority, but legislation regulating Big Tobacco shouldn't be far behind. The threat of a filibuster by Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., and of a veto by President Bush, prevented the legislation from passing last year. But with Obama in the White House, and a strong Democratic majority in the Senate, there are fewer obstacles—and no excuses. By regulating tobacco, the new Congress can secure an early, bipartisan victory that would help set the tone for the rest of the session.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post



Investments needed to improve our economy

By ANTHONY PELLEGRONO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Last Monday we discussed the need for a personal inventory as we venture with great expectations into the New Year—2009! After all, changes begin with us. As we strive for self-improvement, it follows we must demand that our government also improve itself in governing us.

Today let's review the path the government traveled during the previous year. When I mention "government," I combine the administration and the Legislature. Each of us must decide what it has done to make our lives better. You be the judge. As you review each thought, think about what the government has done to improve our lives. What and how they can do better? Which actions or laws specifically helped us to become better citizens and more prosperous?

A. Human Health: What has the government done to improve our health and nutrition? Have services at the hospital improved? Has there been much guidance to how we should improve our health? What should the government do this New Year to make our lives healthier?

B. Business Capital: What has the government done to improve the machinery, facilities used in agriculture, industry, and services? In other words, have we been assisted in creating our internal structures so that we could improve our abilities to generate better farm work, services and other industries?

I have been told that farmers need water for their fields and need help in getting tractors to till their farms. How has the government assisted them this past year and how can it improve its services? Does the government understand the economic potential of increasing our farm productivity or is it just focusing on seeking outside investors?

Why hasn't the government studied how agriculture can become a major industry? We have the land and the people that can produce much of the food we consume. The rest can be exported to Guam and to Japan.

We have a bountiful ocean filled with fish that can be harvested and used for local food and the rest shipped to Guam and to Japan. Why isn't the government studying how fishing can become a major industry along with agriculture?

C. Infrastructure: How do we rate the government's performance on improving our roads, power, water, sanitation, airports and seaports, and telecommunications systems—all critical inputs into business productivity?

This one we have to really ponder over. Just the other day an article in the newspaper mentioned that only a few of over 50 CIP projects have been completed! Yet the money sits while we wait for what?

Think about the power situation, the quality of water we receive and the other sections mentioned above, and we begin to wonder what the heck is going on here. Is it the "lack of money" or something else more serious? Rate the government on these matters over the past year. What should we expect this new year?

D. Human Capital: What has the government done to motivate and assist us to become skilled laborers so that we can earn the money spent on construction and on other jobs here?

Try to find local skilled laborers to build a house or repair it. Almost none exist. Yet we are constantly in need of this vital work. Why are we allowing the money spent on construction, both from the private sector as well as from the public sector, to be exported overseas by guest workers? When are we going to circulate that money in our own community and do the same work by you and me?

I could go on listing areas that the government could be helping its citizens and creating local industries. While inviting investors to come in is a good thing, but where do the local people fit in? Are you feeling the benefits of all the investments here? Is the building of new hotels, casinos, golf courses and other attractions helping you and me to improve our lives with a better personal economy? Or does the extra revenue that comes in from these activities help feed more government employees and more junket trips and the rest exported? What happened to all the money that was generated from the boom times of the garment industry? Did we invest it wisely? Think about it!

The time has come to examine our dependency on outside help. We must depend less and less on outside investors which do little to benefit us. We must pick up our shovels and tools and start building our own destiny. We fail to see the potential diamonds that lie beneath our feet.

Because we have emasculated ourselves over the years through dependency on outside help, we feel helpless. We squandered our resources when they were plentiful without giving thought for a tomorrow.

We belong to a great nation called the United States, yet we do not fully understand how to deal with it to our benefit. Instead of

See INVESTMENTS on Page 13

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor

A rite of accountability

One of my treasured fantasies is an imagined scene at the government center up Capital Hill in one of the buildings, maybe the covered assembly hall just behind the Legislature. It would be at the end of the calendar year, or the first week of January, when the legislative, executive and judicial officers would convene in a brief ritual of accountability.

But first, a context: In life, structures of accountability abound. Driving lagoon-ward from San Vicente down the hill to lower Dandan and Beach Road are five stoplights. Careening down at 35 miles per hour can easily lead to accelerated speeds due to gravitational momentum, and the lights serve as an effective reminder of limits and possibilities.

Whether it be in the political, economic and cultural realms, there are usually two valid perspectives that people adhere to, which are often labeled: "conservative" and "progressive." The first one reflects the understanding that life is bounded by limits, and society is best served if social constraints are in place so that everyone is clear what and where the boundaries are, and people refrain from doing what is consensed as *verboten*. This view is very rule oriented, and people try to conserve the gains from the past to ensure that the wisdom learned is not lost, and mistakes made are not repeated.

The second perspective focuses on possibilities, the adventure of moving beyond proscribed boxes in order to explore the frontiers of progress and discover the cutting edge that makes the unknown known. The human journey is in fact served by a wedgeblade of those who dare use their bodies and social groupings to further push the gains of human culture to realms where no one had gone before, to stand as it were between the no-longer and the not-yet. The dialectic between these two seemingly opposing forces constitutes the Hegelian synthesis, thereby acknowledging the essential function of each in the waltzing journey of the whole.

Thus, in the ritual of accountability, someone like Bishop Thomas A. Camacho, or another symbolic figure outside the three branches of governance, would stand in front of the gathered assembly of public officials, and ask the question: "Have you been faithful to your covenant to serve, defend and promote the well-being of the Commonwealth this past year?"

The specific oath in the Commonwealth Constitution, Article XVII, Section 1 reads: *I do solemnly affirm (or swear) that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, the applicable provisions of the Constitution, laws and treaties of the United States of America, and that I will faithfully discharge my duties to the best of my ability (so help me God)*.

Were this rite be led by a religious cleric conversant in the tradition of confessions and absolutions, then s/he may let the same dynamic apply, only in secular terms. Confession would be a lucid acknowledgment of what had transpired and not the guilt-ridden moralistic condemnation that often accompanies self-righteous piousity.

Obviously, the authentic answer to such a question would be a "Yes and No," or "No and Yes," i.e., everyone begins with a decidedly positive or negative (or, proactive or oppositional) stance but that in the due course of serving one's functions, one either by commission or omission, deviates from original intents, performs the opposite of original plans, or resign to passive indifference that allows inaction itself to become the active choice.

There would be those absolutists who will insist fanatically that they were 100 percent faithful to their covenant, and proudly defend in their minds every thought and action they had taken during the year to be in full conformity to the oath they made in the assumption of their offices. Self-deception being an unshakable human habit do get some folks stuck in extremes, but the honest and conscientious person would stand present, with not a little bit of humility, to the ambiguity and mystery of human wisdom and behavior. To be sure, each could translate each response to a quantitative scale so that one may imagine that the "Yes" was 70 percent of the time while a petulant "No" was 30 percent of the time, or vice-versa. But one would understand that quantity is not what's being assessed, rather, the quality of one's consciousness and understanding is what is being held accountable.

Whether it be in the political, economic and cultural realms, there are usually two valid perspectives that people adhere to, which are often labeled "conservative" and "progressive."

Now, in the old European understanding from which objective assessments evolved, confession without absolution is tyranny, and absolution without confession is libertinism. This is where a Bishop Camacho, or one of symbolic standing, could pronounce the secular metaphors of absolution. The pronouncement would be a recognition that whatever had transpired the year before, it is done, *finis infinitus*. There is no way that the past can be undone, save in sci-fi imaginations of parallel universes. To be sure, there are objective audits and performance evaluations built in to systems, as well as laws and prohibitions that result in consequences when violated, but the point of the absolution would be the affirmation that wishing things had happened differently is a futile exercise, or worst, blame seeking is irreversibly counter productive. The absolution would be a declaration that where we are in the present, just as we are without apology, is an adequate point of new beginnings, that it is in the nature of the future that it is open to innumerable choices and that one only needs to decide to create that which is new!

Imagine if the same dynamic is programmed into our neurological and social networks, and that social organizations and individuals can begin at zero at the end of every annual journey, and a *tabula rasa,* an imaginal clean slate accompanies the launching of a new year. This is not a novel idea. The government of Singapore during Lee Kuan Yew's time practiced zero budgeting where a department begins every fiscal year at zero regardless of how they functioned during the previous fiscal year.

Brain/mind research is discovering that human behavior follows rites and rituals that it had created, and that normal and abnormal functioning (e.g., obsessive-compulsive disorders) is determined by our adherence to those human-made rituals. When there is intentionality in the performance of the ritual, then it is healthy. If the ritual puts consciousness in a reflexive mode so that the ritual determines behavior rather than the other way around, then ritual becomes master rather than servant to the adherents.

On the last Friday of the month in my 6th grade class, we eat lunch together, and we lift up the birthday celebrants during the month. We practice an accountability ritual of a sort. The celebrant is asked what the highlight of the year had been and what expectation s/he has for the coming year. Then s/he is asked: "Have you been faithful to being the one, unique, unrepeatable *(the student's name)* in history that you are, of which there has never been one like you before, and there will never be another one like you ever again?" The students are still getting used to the yin-yang of the "Yes and No," and "No and Yes" answers, but intuitively, they recognize the authenticity, if not accuracy, of the responses.

Litigation and its adversarial nature has become the mode of our societal accountability structures, and its artifice is deadly. Would that we discover again the naturalness of being held accountable, and the glorious reality pervades our consciousness that the past brooks no malice, the present invites affirmation and celebration, and the future remains wondrously open and free.

Have a real new year.

Jaime Vergara
Via e-mail

The grand illusion

Yes Marianas, the Pew propaganda machine is still alive. The most recent example is when the Friends of the Monument—the alter ego of the Pew Environment Group—were attempting to show they have strong community support for their monument proposal. This case is particularly disturbing because I believe it is directed at those in the U.S. mainland who may not recognize it for what it is—an illusion created by the Pew magicians.

This story starts out with a recent trip to Washington, D.C. in early December 2008 by a group of Friends of the Monument to lobby the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to adopt Pew's national marine monument proposal.

The group received positive media coverage from National Public Radio (NPR) who, by the way, is the recipient of numerous generous donations from the Pew Charitable Trusts. In his interview titled 'Bush May Scale Back Plans for Marine Reserve', NPR reporter Richard Harris states "*Salas and Cabrerra went to the White House this week to plead for complete protection for an area the size of Arizona. They brought with them petitions signed by businesses, schoolchildren and 6,000 local residents. The island only has 10,000 voters.*"(see http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97967207)

After their D.C. trip, the Friends of the Monument sent a letter (dated 15 December 2008) to Mr. James Connaughton (Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality) stating among other things "*More than 60 of us gathered signatures on a petition in support of a marine national monument – which 6000 residents signed! That's an unheard of number and dwarfs the 2300 votes of the top vote getter in the recent election for our first congressional delegate."* (see http://marianamonument.blogspot.com/2008/12/letter-to-connaughton.html)

An editorial appeared in the *LA Times* on 30 December 2008 which stated: *"Yet the majority of residents of the Marianas seem to disagree with their leaders; polls and petitions of the islands' 10,000 registered voters show strong support."*

(see http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-oceans30-2008dec30,0,4945323,print.story)

And finally, in a *Saipan Tribune* article titled "*Marine monument plan proves divisive for NMI*" (1 January 2009) the same claim is again repeated: "*The group* (Friends of the Monument) *launched a signature campaign and claimed to have garnered some 6,000 supporters for the plan. The CNMI has a voting population of 10,000."* (see http://www.saipantribune.com/newsstory.aspx?cat=1&newsID=86563

Pew's claim has a very specific point—it is suppose to show wide based community support for their monument proposal. Of course, we in the Marianas know this is not true; however Pew's purpose is to create the **illusion** of strong community support so as to influence the decision makers at CEQ and the White House to adopt their monument proposal.

In a futile attempt to make it appear that Pew's proposal has strong community support where there is none, the number of petition signatures (e.g., 6,000) is compared directly to the number of CNMI voters. In order to mislead the reader into thinking the petition has even greater significance; Pew substantially underestimates the CNMI voter population at 10,000.

Fatal flaws with Pew's interpretation of the facts includes the reality that their petition contains the names of tourists, children/kids, and foreign guest workers—people who cannot vote in the CNMI. In addition, a quick call to the Commonwealth Election Commission informed me that the CNMI currently has 13,000 voters (a decrease from previous elections). The number of signatures on the Pew petition and number of CNMI voters are UNRELATED issues.

The Pew illusion of strong community support quickly fades away when the reader realizes that you cannot compare a petition containing non-voting signatories (e.g., apples) to the number of CNMI voters (e.g., oranges)! This comparison is invalid, purposely misleading, and an insult to the people of the Marianas.

While I certainly support the right for any and all individuals to sign whatever petition they wish, I expect Pew to have some dignity and moral principles to accurately interpret conclusions from their campaign, especially when the information is widely disseminated across the US mainland. Unfortunately, I believe this is just too much to ask from the Pew Environment Group.

Misleading the general public is only a part of Pew's overall campaign plan to create the illusion that the people of the Marianas support their monument proposal. The CNMI and Guam Governments and a majority of people in the Marianas do not support the Pew monument proposal. We know the truth, but will CEQ and the White House see through Pew's smoke and mirrors and reject their monument proposal? Will President Bush care more about politics then the sensitive cultural and sustainable use concerns raised time and time again by the people of the Marianas? I understand we will find out shortly.

The Marianas Trench National Monument: Our Ocean—Bush's Legacy—Pew's Future!

John Gourley
Navy Hill

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼75°	▲86° ▼76°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲81	▼74
Palau	Showers	▲85	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Sunny	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Sunny	▲86	▼74
Kosrae	Showers	▲86	▼78
Majuro	Sunny	▲83	▼73

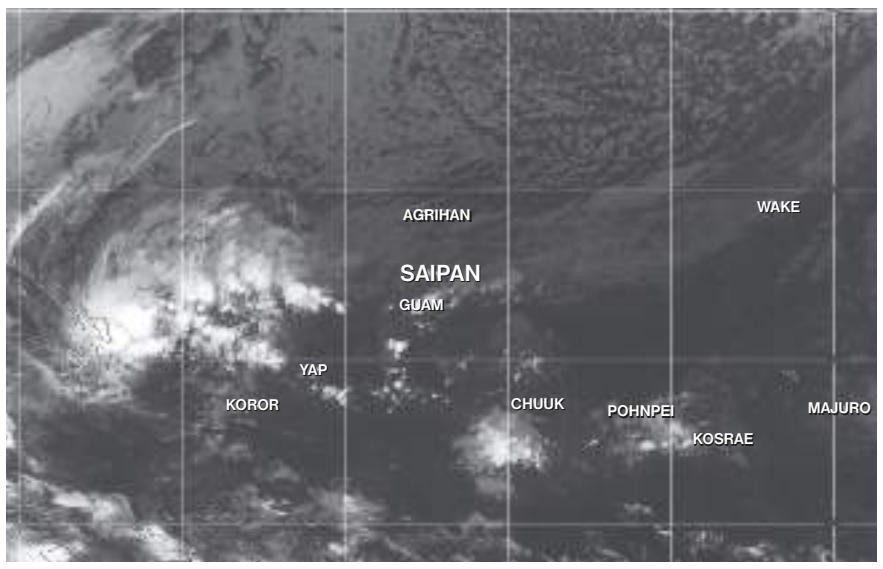
Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	▲70	▼59
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲33	▼18
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲69	▼58
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲78	▼69
London	Cloudy	▲34	▼21
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲65	▼48
Manila	Showers	▲82	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲82	▼62
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼69
New York	Cloudy	▲43	▼27
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲47	▼33
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲30	▼19
Pusan	Cloudy	▲43	▼24
Rome	Sunny	▲48	▼39
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼43
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲55	▼46
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲31	▼13
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼29
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲47	▼27

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
1:41AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
7:03AM Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
1:28PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
8:54PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, SUNDAY, JAN. 4, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front stretches southwestward from northeast of Wake Island at 25N172E to east of the Marianas at 16N155E then continues west-southwestward as a shear line across Rota at 14N145E to beyond 130E at 13N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 300 miles north of this boundary east of 139E to the west of 139E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring along and up to 300 miles north of this boundary. A low-level circulation is centered west of Koror near 8N128E. Trade-wind convergence east of the circulation center is combining with upper-level divergence to produce scattered showers and a few thunderstorms north of Koror and northwest of Yap within 140 miles of a line from 10N130E to 12N136E. Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers near the equator and northeastward to Pohnpei but west of Kosrae or within 90 miles of a line from 1N149E to 5N154E to 6N162E. Similar conditions are also seen north of Chuuk between 8N and 11N from 150E to 154E and near the dateline east of a line from 4N175E to 8N178E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45AM	6:00 PM
Tuesday	6:45AM	6:01 PM
Wednesday	6:45AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	6:45AM	6:02 PM
Friday	6:46AM	6:03 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:18PM	12:21 AM
Tuesday	1:03PM	1:16 AM
Wednesday	1:53PM	2:16 AM
Thursday	2:51PM	3:20 AM
Friday	3:55PM	4:27 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Letters to the Editor

An appeal and statement of political opinion

"Can you say, 'mendacity,' boys and girls? Sure... sure you can."—***Mr. Rogers***

With eyes on the CNMI, many of us who have lived parts of our lives in the Marianas continue to take rapt interest in news from your beautiful, but unfortunately morally contaminated, islands. I have followed the ups and downs of Marianas governments and societal attitudes in the CNMI for sometime. Since leaving the Marianas for the greener pastures on the mainland several years ago, I have observed from afar the ascendance of institutionalized blatant moral turpitude on a grand scale in the CNMI. Now I find that it's time I express my thoughts and opinions to whomever will hear or read them in the Marianas.

No good person with a moral conscience should sit by at this time in light of the disturbing events that have revealed once and for all, the corrupted morality in the shameful local labor and immigration system in the CNMI.

*"Anything that reduces truth is a lie." "Anything that delays revelation of truth is a lie."—**from THE AGELESS ADEPT (pseudonymous A. Seeker)***

Citizens, hear me out. This is happening to you! It is now clear, absolutely and abundantly clear, that for the sake of all the people, local indigenous, citizen transplants, and foreign guest workers alike, Cinta Kaipat, the patronage-appointed assistant director of the Department of Labor, MUST be fired NOW. Ms. Kaipat must then be disbarred from the practice of law in the CNMI! That is the opinion of many absentee observers who watch the CNMI with the clear vision of objective distance. Perhaps you think this opinion is extreme. Okay. But please consider the facts and ask yourself this: Do you think this poor, maligned, "well meaning" (ha!) bureaucrat, privileged woman should be tolerated and deferred to simply because she's related by blood to people in higher places? Is that what you think? Cinta Kaipat serves in a patronage position at DOLI under the watchful eye of her hate-shouting uncle, Benigno Fitial. Do you not remember Fitial's racist tirade as he drove past a group of activists, "Filipinos, go home. You are ALL illegal here"?

In light of the recent revelations of Cinta Kaipat's complicity with Deane Siemer to engage in premeditated malicious e-mailing to Rep. Tina M. Sablan for the purpose of intentionally delaying communication of legally requested operational information, it is obvious that her lack of ethics in government and the general lack of moral responsibility in her department (DOLI) is a corrupt standard operating procedure. Human rights and legal procedures are certainly being abridged by the disreputable odd-couple of Seimer and Kaipat. This unholy alliance of coconspirators in a scheme to impede access to information necessary to fair and honest administration of the Labor agency is an atrocity.

These ambitious and corrupt scoundrels are an insult to the principles of fair, honest, and open government in the CNMI. On the other hand, you might think Ms. Siemer's lying, harassing, phony joke emails are harmless. Think again.

Impeding fair, honest, and open government isn't "harmless." Conspiring to thwart the operation of a critical government agency and the legislative branch isn't "harmless." Harassing a government official with "bogus" or deceptive communications isn't "harmless." Being a "volunteer" who attempts to shape the policies and procedures of a government agency for which she is a "servant" not a director, isn't "harmless."

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Siemer's e-mails to Jacinta Matagolai Kaipat and to Rep. Tina M. Sablan are "smoking guns." Siemer's e-mailing are good enough proof of the moral corruption that is tolerated in your institutions because this unethical phony Seimer operates with the de facto authority from the central government. Siemer is a coconspirator with Cinta Kaipat to undermine honest government. As such the CNMI government itself continues to show itself, in many ways, to be the moral equivalent of a crime syndicate if it isn't actually the real thing... an organization tantamount to a mob of gangsters.

In fairness, though, a second opinion might be appropriate. Okay, then. It is my second opinion that in lieu of being fired and/or disbarred, Jacinta Matagolai Kaipat most certainly should be enjoined, censured, forbidden, and barred (if not disbarred), from holding any administrative office within the government that permits her to be the direct enforcer of a heavy-handed P.L. 15-108 law of which she is the author. And Siemer should be prosecuted for violating the laws of ethics in government. Or maybe the sweet CNMI has never bothered to put such expectations for its officials and their "volunteer" assistants into law. Simple logic: Cinta Kaipat and her sidekick, Deane Siemer, must go.

I'll tell you why.This barking former legislator's public writings, most certainly ghost written or authored by her phony "volunteer" friend at the Division of Labor (yep, that's right, Ms. Siemer), but nevertheless appearing over Ms. Kaipat's signature, are flush with racist innuendo and implications, fat with discriminatory extra-legal "opinions," and most insidiously, are rife with contrived legal theories invented to justify inhumane and indefensible legalistic manipulation that can, when the department chooses, in effect, blatantly and shamelessly deny due process and basic human rights to criminally mistreated, but legitimate, invited foreign guest workers in the Commonwealth.

Ms. Kaipat's (or her counterparts) concocted legal theories amount to little more than tendentious rationalizations. Ah, but you intellectually honest and morally astute residents of the community can be the final judges of these statements. These are my opinions. How does one answer an invited guest worker who has run headlong into the barriers and obstructions thrown in his or her path by Ms. Kaipat, her lackeys, and the bullheaded administrators of her prejudiced pet project, P.L. 15-108, What happened to American justice? Who can explain the unexplainable? Do you tell a good, honest, hardworking longterm resident worker that the CNMI government, this authority in an American jurisdiction, believes that both legalized hostage holding and whimsical abandonment of time-honored principles of human rights are simultaneously permissible depending on its capricious mood? Do you say that the CNMI, as an American territory, does its utmost to twist law and reason in un-American ways that hold peoples lives in limbo, essentially as hostages for as long or a short a time as it pleases without giving real due process or even permitting them reasonable and humane recourse or redress of their (labor) grievances? Does anyone cringe at that thought? Can anyone give a justifiable reason for the lack of ethics? Can anyone make a valid explanation? Apparently, the CNMI overseers and their mercenary hired hands (if the shoe fits, wear it, Ms. Siemer) can tie people up in an administrative "Neverland" of false information, misinformation, and missing information for as long as anyone at the Labor Department pleases.

Apparently the big shots at Labor think that they have the law all unto themselves without accountability and that they can throw any resident worker out of the CNMI on a trumped-up whim regardless of their circumstances. Under the twisted legalistic cloak of Ms. Kaipat's P.L. 15-108, the "system" can apparently threaten any non-citizen worker's livelihood and can also threaten their very survival. It is clear that Kaipat and Siemer often conspire together to intentionally, without compunction, act to destroy their families by separating them from their U.S. citizen children, et al. because they enjoy wielding the perks of power. And, the CNMI authorities can seemingly also justify refusing to provide remedies for mistreated workers who only want to work in dignity. The CNMI administration (Fitial, et al.) and its lackeys working in the farthest corner of the American nation can deny human rights to invited guests, because under Cinta Kaipat (with Deane Siemer bellowing in her ear) neither cares about them nor wants to hear their legitimate complaints. In a society in which we allow immoral rules and create discriminatory laws, laws built not on the basis of their inherent rightness or wrongness, but on how a lot of politicians actually behave, we create a wider corrupt society destined eventually to fail in every way. That is what we have seen to be happening in the CNMI. And the CNMI is reaping the fruit of its political moral failings. The politicians and the governments patronage-heavy bureaucracy filled with their appointed flunkies, like Cinta Kaipat and Deane Siemer, can no longer be allowed to say that lying, cheating, misappropriating public funds, obstructing honest government, outright stealing, and abridging human rights are ethically permissible, let alone laudable.

Because if this kind of turpitude continues to be the island way it is, of course, not only ridiculous, indefensible, and dangerous, but it will also ultimately spell total federal takeover of CNMI and will be the demise of the CNMI as a discrete political entity.

You can count on it, boys and girls! Agree or disagree, this is an honest and open opinion... unlike the trash-talk, deceptions and utter mendacity that has been coming of late from Cinta Kaipat and her gray-ghost writer, jokester, "volunteer" friend, Deane Siemers.

Carlos J. Naranja Jr.
Boca Raton, Florida

INVESTMENTS

From Page 10

seeking understanding, we seek confrontation. When are we going to realize that we are an asset to them in that they need us as much as we need them? We must create a better dialogue between the two of us.

I have repeatedly mentioned in these articles and in public and hopefully through my small personal actions that the CNMI is rich. But sadly many of us don't believe that. We are situated between two rich locations—North America and Asia. We have access to both markets. We have year-round climate that is near perfect. We have beautiful scenery overlooking a lovely ocean. And we have warm and friendly people. But sadly we lack insight into how God has blessed us. We haven't learned how to cultivate our garden.

I am reminded of the story of the farmer working in his fields. One day a preacher happened by and saw how well tended and how bountiful the farm was. He stopped, walked over to the farmer busy at work in the field and remarked: "My friend, God has blessed you

with a bountiful farm." The farmer paused, looked up and replied: "Father, perhaps that is so, but you should have seen it when he gave it to me!"

I have to insert a personal experience of mine that fits in with the story above. Do any of you recall what the area where the lovely Outer Cove Marina is located looked like back in 1994 before work was begun on it? This is what I am talking about. We have a beautiful island but we are constantly desecrating it.

As you review the points mentioned above, think—what laws has the government passed this past year that have helped us personally in enjoying our lives? At the same time think of the laws that are petty, meaningless and stifle our creativity.

The Greeks had a king called Sisyphus who offended Zeus, their supreme god. For this, Sisyphus was forced to roll an enormous boulder to the top of a steep hill. Every time the boulder neared the top, it would roll back down, and Sisyphus would have to start over. Sometimes I feel that we in the CNMI are just like Sisyphus. We get near a goal and then-wham! We have to start all over again.

I have mentioned it before and I will repeat it: I am glad that Federalization is here. Believe it or not, we will greatly benefit from it if we just understand that it is for our own good.

In closing, I hope that the above has caused us to think at how blessed we are. But we also need the government to improve itself. We can become a prosperous nation again if we will lift up our hands and get to work. **Let's get off our buts (excuses)! Do it!** Insist that our government do a better job of assisting us.

We have had a good past history. We cannot change the history of the past, but we can influence the future. As Thomas Jefferson said: **"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."**

Don't you have a good and kind heart, sir?

Mr. McCue, when I read the story to my 5-year-old son about the story of discrimination in church, my son said that whoever Mr. Cepeda is, he should be ashamed of what he did. And now, when I read to him your comment about what had happened, he said that it is also shameful for somebody to understand what Mr. Cepeda did.

Anybody who really has the heart for the "least of His brothers" will never accept and understand what Mr. Cepeda did. Not unless you are like those people who are so narcissistic whom the spotlight would like to be only on you. I don't understand why there are so many people who are so selfish and instead of complimenting these talented people, they were so envious and were mad because somebody is better than them. I got it! I hope Mr. Cepeda is not an ill-educated person. Because the way he acted to the Filipina, it tells us so. No person in a right mind would do that anyway. I hope Mr. McCue you wouldn't do that either. I felt so many times that you are against these contract workers. I don't know if you had a bad experience with them or so but I hope you don't add fuel to the fire with your comments. You know that it was wrong with what Mr. Vic Cepeda did but you still come up with a way for you to understand. I just wish you could feel the pain that the poor Filipina felt and the other contract workers who were mistreated by those kind of arrogant people. If you could only put yourself in their shoe... Don't you have a good and kind heart, sir?

Kayc Lynn
Houston, Texas

Business

Obama: Country needs economic stimulus plan

CHICAGO (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama urged congressional leaders Saturday to move quickly on an economic recovery plan, even as some Republicans are saying they want more time to review the details.

Obama said Congress should pass an American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan designed to create 3 million jobs. The Democratic president-elect hasn't announced a final price tag on it, but aides said the cost could be as high as $775 billion.

"For too many families, this new year brings new unease and uncertainty as bills pile up, debts continue to mount and parents worry that their children won't have the same opportunities they had," Obama said in an address taped Friday and distributed on radio and posted on YouTube Saturday morning.

The nation's economy remains the top challenge facing Obama when he takes office on Jan. 20. The Federal Reserve estimated that lenders were on track to initiate 2.25 million foreclosures this year, more than doubling the annual pace before the crisis set in. One in 10 U.S. homeowners is delinquent on mortgage payments or in foreclosure.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., are to receive details on Monday. Obama plans meetings next week with other congressional leaders—including Republican members whose support he will need—and made an effort not to blame his predecessor, the unpopular President George W. Bush.

"However we got here, the problems we face today are not Democratic problems or Republican problems," Obama said. "The dreams of putting a child through college, or staying in your home, or retiring with dignity and security know no boundaries of party or ideology. ... I am optimistic that if we come together to seek solutions that advance not the interests of any party, or the agenda of any one group, but the aspirations of all Americans, then we will meet the challenges of our time just as previous generations have met the challenges of theirs."

Obama aides had hoped to have an economic plan approved by the House and Senate before Obama takes office. That timeline, though, appears unlikely as time is running out and Republicans have urged a delay to review the plans. Sen. Mitch McConnell, the Republicans' top official, said the plan needs time so that "every dollar needs to be spent wisely and not wasted in the rush to get it spent."

Congressional aides briefed on the measure say it's likely to blend tax cuts of $500 to $1,000 for middle-class individuals and couples with about $200 billion to help revenue-starved states with their Medicaid programs and other operating costs.

A large portion of the measure will go toward infrastructure projects, blending old-fashioned brick and mortar programs such as road and bridge repairs and water projects with new programs such as research and development on energy efficiency and an expensive rebuilding of the information technology system for health care.

END OF RAINBOW AP

In this Dec. 17, 1998 file photo, guests at New York's Rainbow Room dance on the revolving floor of the restaurant and nightclub just before it was temporarily closed and remodeled. WNBC-TV reported Friday, Jan. 3, 2009, that the current economic state and a lease dispute with the building landlord, Tishman Speyer, is causing the owners to shutter the Italian-themed Rainbow Grill restaurant temporarily, while keeping the establishment's bar, banquet space and dinner-dancing going.

Wall Street enjoys upbeat start to 2009

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street started 2009 with a big rally Friday as investors, brushing aside a disappointing report on manufacturing, sent the Dow Jones industrials up more than 250 points and to their first close above 9,000 in two months. All the major indexes shot up more than six percent for the week.

The market lived up to the hopes of many analysts that it would have a fresh start in the new year after a horrific 2008. But many traders were also waiting to see how the market fares next week; they're cognizant of the fact that post-holiday volume was light and therefore Friday's trading might not be the best indicator of market sentiment.

Still, the market held to its recent pattern of taking bad economic news in stride, a pattern that began to emerge after it touched multiyear lows on Nov. 20.

"Over the last month you've started to see a change in sentiment and this certainly advances that," said Carl Beck, partner at Harris Financial Group in Richmond, Va. The Institute for Supply Management said its manufacturing activity index fell to the lowest level in 28 years in December. The ISM, a trade group of purchasing executives, said its manufacturing index fell to 32.4 last month from 36.2 in November. Economists polled by Thomson Reuters had expected a reading of 35.5; a figure below 50 indicates contraction.

"We like to see the markets shrug off the bad news. That typically is a sign that we're forming a bottom," said Eric Thorne, an investment adviser at Bryn Mawr Trust.

Todd Leone, managing director at Cowen & Co., cautioned against reading too much into Friday's advance and said the first full week of the new year should provide insight into investor sentiment for 2009.

Ukraine: Serious gas shortages possible

KIEV, Ukraine (AP)—A top Ukrainian official has warned that European customers could see serious natural gas disruptions in about two weeks if the energy dispute between Russia and Ukraine is not resolved, and the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom accused Ukraine of boycotting contract negotiations.

As Russia and Ukraine traded accusations in their bitter dispute over energy prices on Saturday, four European nations—Romania, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria—all reported some supply drops in natural gas Saturday.

Gazprom cut off gas shipments to Ukraine on Thursday. Then Gazprom and Ukraine embarked on dueling charm offensives, both trying to assure western European nations that they were reliable energy partners and the fault lay with their rival.

The Russian delegation hoped to convince investors in Prague, Paris, Berlin and London that Kiev is to blame for any gas shortages, saying Ukraine is siphoning off natural gas from Russian shipments, as well as refusing to pay $600 million in fines or negotiate a new price contract for 2009.

Russia supplies Ukraine with natural gas and also sends 80 percent of its gas supplies to Europe through pipelines in Ukraine. The stakes in the dispute are high because Europe relies on Russia for a quarter of its gas needs—and because heat is crucial in the biting northern European winter.

Meanwhile, Bohdan Sokolovsky, an economic aide to Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, warned that serious disruptions could hit Russia's European customers, if Russia continues to refuse to ship gas allocated for Ukraine to Ukraine. Sokolovsky said even though Ukraine continued to pump Russian gas destined for Europe, European countries could see major shortfalls in 10 to 15 days.

Without Ukraine's share of gas in the shipment from Russia, the overall gas levels in the pipeline transit system begin to fall. Sokolovsky said if that continues, an automatic shutdown will be triggered because the system requires a minimum amount of gas to maintain pipeline pressure.

"It is obvious that this is political pressure on Ukraine," Sokolovsky said of Russia's gas cutoff. "This is pure politics."

Flowers, Soros, Dell team to buy IndyMac

WASHINGTON (AP)—A seven-member investor group including billionaire George Soros and Dell Inc. founder Michael Dell have agreed to purchase failed lender IndyMac Bank, one of the largest casualties of the housing bust, for $13.9 billion.

IndyMac, which specialized in loans made with little down payment or proof of assets, was seized by the government in July after a run on the bank as the U.S. housing market collapsed. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. said Friday that a holding company led by Steven Mnuchin, co-chief executive of private equity firm Dune Capital Management, agreed to buy IndyMac in a deal reached Wednesday.

The investors have formed a partnership, called IMB Management Holdings LP, that includes Dell's investment firm, MSD Capital. Once the deal closes, the investment group will pour $1.3 billion in new capital into IndyMac and continue to operate the Pasadena, Calif-based bank, the FDIC said.

"We have assembled a group of experienced private investors in financial services to acquire the former IndyMac and operate it under new management with extensive banking experience," Mnuchin said in a statement. "We will inject significant private capital into IndyMac so that it can once again effectively serve its customers and communities."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Pimco will pay delayed dividend after all

NEW YORK (AP)—Pacific Investment Management Co., which runs the world's largest bond fund, agreed to pay a monthly common share dividend that it had suspended earlier this week after a fund's asset coverage fell below required levels. The company said Friday it would pay an 8.125-cent dividend to Municipal Income Fund shareholders of record as of Dec. 11. Pimco on Wednesday had delayed dividends due on its Municipal Income Fund and New York Municipal Income Fund II because the funds' asset coverage ratios fell below 200 percent amid market declines. A fund must have at least $2 in assets for every $1 worth of preferred shares issued. Federal law prohibits a fund from paying or declaring common share dividends that would put the fund below that threshold. In a statement, Pimco didn't address the postponed payment on its New York Municipal Income Fund II.

NY business sues Madoff to get back $10 million

NEW YORK (AP)—A fuel service company has sued the trustee in charge of liquidating Bernard Madoff's assets, seeking to recover $10 million it invested with the disgraced financier. Rosenman Family LLC of Great Neck, New York, said in the lawsuit filed in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan on Thursday that it deposited the money in one of Madoff's accounts on Dec. 5, six days before Madoff was arrested. The money was supposed to be invested after the first of the year with Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC. The lawsuit names trustee Irving H. Picard along with JP Morgan Chase & Co., where the company says it deposited the money. Picard declined to comment, as did a lawyer for the bank. Madoff is under house arrest awaiting trial on a securities fraud charge after allegedly admitting that he lost more than $50 billion from investors in a Ponzi scheme. Investors have begun filing lawsuits aimed at recovering money from Madoff and some of the securities funds that invested with him.

Nation

Bush's personality shapes his legacy

WASHINGTON (AP)—President George W. Bush will be judged on what he did. He will also be remembered for what he's like: a fast-moving, phrase-mangling Texan who stays upbeat even though his country is not.

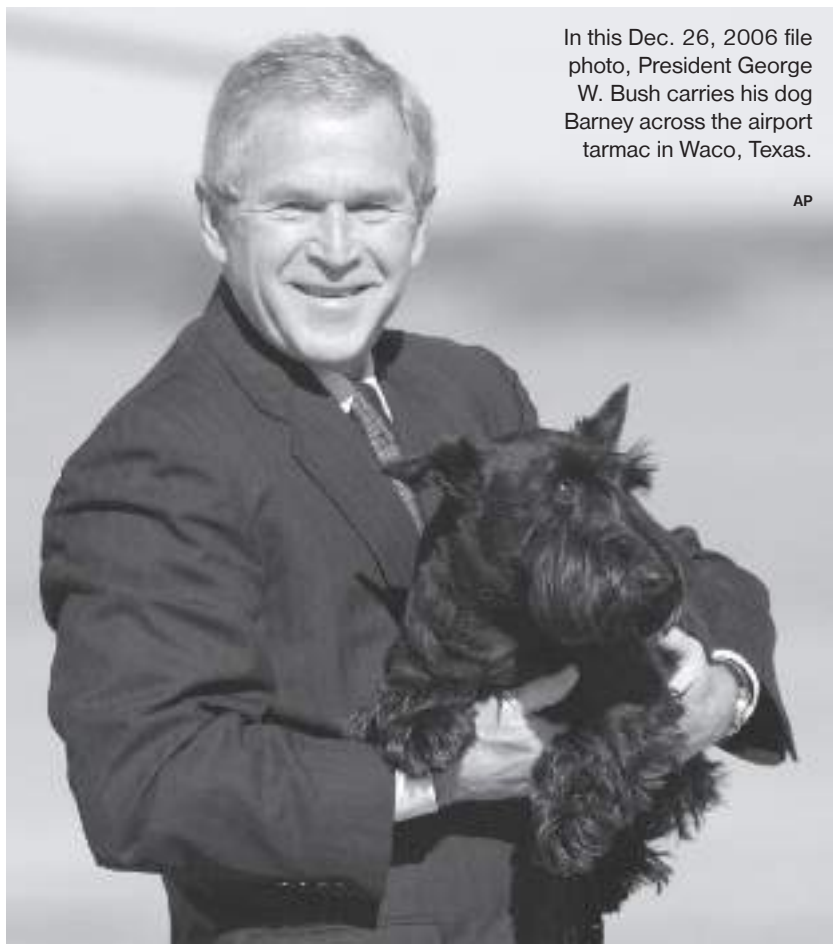
For eight years, the nation has been led by a guy who relaxes by clearing brush in scorching heat and taking breakneck bike rides through the woods. He dishes out nicknames to world leaders, and even gave the German chancellor an impromptu, perhaps unwelcome, neck rub. He's annoyed when kept waiting and sticks relentlessly to routine. He stays optimistic in even the most dire circumstances, but readily tears up in public. He has little use for looking within himself, and only lately has done much looking back.

Bush's style and temperament are as much his legacy as his decisions. Policy shapes lives, but personality creates indelible memories—positive and negative.

Call it distinctly Bush.

Don't be late.

Bush demands punctuality and disdains inefficiency. Every meeting better have a clear purpose. And it better not repeat what he already knows



In this Dec. 26, 2006 file photo, President George W. Bush carries his dog Barney across the airport tarmac in Waco, Texas.

AP

He is up early and in the Oval Office by 6:45 a.m. By 9:30 to 10 at night, it's lights out. He likes to be fresh and won't get cheated on his sleep. In sessions with policy experts, Bush tends to ask questions that get right to the nub of a sticky issue. His top aides speak regretfully about how the country never got to see that side of him, even after all this time. They describe a man who is deeply inquisitive, not blithely incurious as much of the world thinks.

When Bush wants answers, guessing isn't advised.

ANALYSIS

"He can sniff it out a mile away if you don't have the goods," said White House communications director Kevin Sullivan.

Other people write Bush's speeches, but he'll kick out phrases that he thinks stray from a logical progression. It's about discipline.

You can tell the issues that really get Bush going, because he talks about them differently, more passionately: education, AIDS relief, freedom. They happen to be ones that can be viewed more clearly through a moral lens. That's how he sees the world.

Bush reads the Bible regularly. Another devotion: exercise. He makes time for a workout at least six days a week, wherever he is. And he goes at it hard, especially on his mountain bike on the weekends, when he pushes Secret Service agents to keep up with him. He is competitive and likes to stay in command.

Even eating is approached with sheer purpose.

Bush wants his lunch ready when he is, and wolfs it down. His tastes are clear: maybe a peanut butter and honey sandwich, a BLT, or a burger. Former White House executive chef Walter Scheib learned from Bush never to serve a grilled cheese sandwich unless it came with a side of French's yellow mustard.

The man from a land of cowboy boots orders proper dress in the White House. No jeans allowed in the West Wing. Coat and tie in the Oval Office.

"Orderliness in the process gave him confidence," said Peter Wehner, a former top Bush aide and now a senior fellow at the Ethics & Public Policy Center.

And if you're in Bush's presence, turn off your cell phone. Pity the person who gets the Bush stare when a Blackberry rings at the wrong time.

Homicides are down in some large US cities

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Killings dropped by a third here last year, making Wisconsin's largest city among the nation's most successful in tackling its 2008 murder rate.

While New York and Chicago saw an uptick in slayings last year, other cities including Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Los Angeles had fewer violent deaths in '08 than '07.

And though a study released Monday by Northeastern University showed black teenagers killing each other in rising numbers, Milwaukee stands out. The number of black men between the ages of 15 and 29 killed dropped nearly two-thirds, from 54 in 2007 to 19 last year.

Total homicides dropped 32 percent, from 105 in 2007 to 71 last year—the lowest number since 1985. The city also saw fewer gun deaths.

"I think today Milwaukee is allowed to feel good about itself because this reduction is the work of many people. ... This year they saw a return on their investment," Police Chief Edward Flynn told a news conference Friday.

Milwaukee police union president John Balcerzak said Flynn's ideas are contributing to the declines in crime. He pointed to creation of a neighborhood task force, the assignment of 57 new police officers to foot patrols across the city and use of limited duty officers to handle lower priority complaints by phone as improvements.

Cops: Dad ordered to pay child support kills son

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—A man who initially told police gunmen kidnapped his 2 1/2-year-old son was arrested Saturday, accused of committing an "extremely hideous" murder because he was ordered to pay child support, Police Superintendent Warren Riley said.

Danny Platt confessed, told police where to find the child's body and will be booked on a charge of first-degree murder in the death of Ja' Shawn Powell, Riley said at a news conference.

"He had said he would kill either his wife or his child before he paid child support," which he recently had been ordered to do, Riley said.

Riley said he did not know the amount of child support and would not describe how the boy was killed, saying the coroner would do that after the autopsy was complete. The coroner's spokesman did not immediately return a call.

"The mother is in a safe place," Riley said.

Although he had visiting rights, Platt, 22, of New Orleans, had never visited the boy until he picked him up Friday, Riley said.

Police put out a notice Saturday asking people to look for the boy and saying his father had told them three men with dreadlocks and AK-47 rifles had piled out of an SUV and kidnapped Ja' Shawn shortly before midnight Friday.

"His story never really added up," Riley said. "He was a suspect from the very beginning."

Riley said Platt eventually confessed and told officers where to find the body.

Police spokesman officer Janssen Valencia said he did not know if Platt has an attorney.

Platt had only a couple of "very minor" previous arrests, Riley said.

"How does an individual—because he's ordered to pay child support to take care of a kid ... believe that this is so much pressure that he would face—he would do this hideous act to his own child, or to any child, and think that is a remedy to paying child support?" Riley said. "I mean there are some sick individuals in this society, and this gentleman is clearly one."

Sen. Reid called Blagojevich about Senate seat

CHICAGO (AP)—Illinois' embattled governor complained through his spokesman Saturday that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is guilty of a conflict of interest in that Reid telephoned him in early December to discuss the seat being vacated by President-elect Barack Obama.

Lucio Guerrero, spokesman for Gov. Rod Blagojevich, said he didn't know firsthand which candidates the Nevada Democrat supported during the call, but said he knows Reid's candidates did not include Roland Burris, the man the governor recently picked for Obama's seat.

Senate leaders have vowed to oppose the appointment of Burris.

"I think the governor believes there is a conflict of interest—that Reid showed he has a horse in the race and Roland Burris wasn't one of them," Guerrero said.

In an e-mail to The Associated Press, Reid spokesman Jim Manley confirmed the majority leader called Blagojevich on Dec. 3—six days before the governor's arrest on federal corruption charges—to talk about the vacancy. Prosecutors say Blagojevich at the time was trying to peddle Obama's seat in exchange for money or a job in Obama's cabinet.

Manley declined to name the candidates discussed, saying there was "no need to embarrass the people that were subject of the conversation."

ACROSS THE NATION

Denver schools chief named to fill Senate vacancy

DENVER (AP)—Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter on Saturday named Denver's public schools superintendent as his choice to fill a Senate vacancy that will be created by the promotion of Sen. Ken Salazar to interior secretary in the Obama administration. The move surprised many Republicans and Democrats, who considered schools superintendent Michael Bennet a dark horse candidate for the Senate spot because of his lack of legislative experience. The 44-year-old Democrat has never campaigned for or held public office. Bennet had been mentioned as a possible choice for President-elect Barack Obama's education secretary, but Obama chose 44-year-old Arne Duncan, chief executive officer of Chicago public schools for the Cabinet post. Salazar's nomination to head the Interior Department will be considered by the Senate. He has two years left in his term. Ritter praised Bennet as a proven leader and problem-solver in the both public and private sectors.

NY judge: Religion aside, monkey meat needs permit

NEW YORK (AP)—A federal judge in Brooklyn has rejected a Liberian woman's religious reasons for smuggling endangered monkey meat into the country. U.S. District Judge Raymond J. Dearie ruled Wednesday that Mamie Manneh's faith didn't preclude her from applying for permits to import exotic food or explain why she misled officials. Manneh was charged with smuggling the meat three years ago after customs agents seized a shipment of primate parts as it passed through Kennedy Airport on the way to her home in Staten Island. Manneh's lawyers claimed a First Amendment right, arguing that some Liberian Christians eat monkey meat for spiritual reasons. Her lawyer didn't respond to phone messages Saturday. She faces up to five years in prison and deportation if convicted.

Conn. man's last lotto ticket wins $10M for widow

DANBURY, Conn. (AP)—On the day that Donald Peters died, he unknowingly provided financial security for his wife of 59 years and their family. Peters bought two Connecticut Lottery tickets at a local 7-Eleven store on Nov. 1 as part of a 20-year tradition he shared with his wife Charlotte. Later that day, the 79-year-old retired hat factory worker suffered a fatal heart attack while working in his yard in Danbury. On Friday, his widow cashed in one of the tickets: a $10 million winner which, in her grief over her husband's death, she had put aside and almost discarded before recently checking the numbers. "I'm numb," Charlotte Peters, 78, said at Connecticut Lottery headquarters in Rocky Hill. Donald Peters usually bought the tickets for 10 weeks at a stretch, so the winning ticket he bought Nov. 1 for the Dec. 2 drawing was among several that Charlotte Peters put aside as she, their three children and two grandchildren coped with his sudden death. "I was in the grocery store and I had it checked and they told me I was a winner," she said. "I had no idea how much it was." She said she thought she had won $6 million but was surprised to learn from lottery officials she'd won $10 million.

Asia

Thai officials struggle to identify fire victims

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Forensics experts in Thailand struggled to identify charred corpses while 26 victims were still receiving emergency medical care Saturday following a New Year's Eve fire in a packed Bangkok nightclub.

The death toll stood at 61 on Saturday although a final list of casualties, which include a number of foreigners, has yet to be issued, the Narenthorn Emergency Center coordinating the medical aid operation said.

Dr. Chatree Charoencheewakul at the center said two more deaths were reported Friday night, while 26 people still in intensive care units at several Bangkok hospitals. Police were still trying to identify 15 bodies.

A Singaporean was among the dead, while injured foreigners were from Australia, Belgium, Britain, France, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and the United States, according to officials and reporters.

Interior Minister Chavarat Charnvirakul said Friday that the fire could further damage the country's image, already battered by widespread political protests and a recent weeklong closure of the capital's two airports. The unrest has crippled the country's essential tourism industry at a time when the economy was already sagging amid the global financial meltdown.

The statement came as police investigated the cause of the fire. Police Maj. Gen. Jongrak Jutanont said authorities were focusing on whether the blaze was sparked by a countdown fireworks display organized by the club owners or by firecrackers brought in by guests.

AP

Fire and rescue officials remove a victim Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009, following a night club fire in Bangkok, Thailand.

More than 200 were injured from smoke inhalation, burns and injuries sustained during a stampede out the one main door of the club, which catered to young well-to-do Thais, tourists and expatriates.

"It's about the lax law enforcement which we need to strengthen," Charnvirakul told reporters while visiting victims at Chulalongkorn Hospital. "But an accident like this can happen everywhere and in every country. But I really don't want this to happen because it came from carelessness."

No charges related to the fire have been filed yet, but the owner, Thai-Chinese businessman Wisuth Setsawat, was initially charged with allowing underage customers into the Santika Club, Jongrak said. A 17-year-old high school student was found among the dead, he said.

Sri Lanka presses on with fight against rebels

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan forces launched air strikes and ground assaults on ethnic Tamil rebels in the north Saturday, a day after dealing the separatists' struggle for autonomy a devastating blow by capturing their de facto capital, the military said.

But in a sign the insurgents remained determined to battle on, a small bomb planted under a car exploded on a busy street in Colombo on Saturday, wounding three people, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. The attack came a day after a suspected rebel suicide attacker blew himself up near air force headquarters in the city, killing three airmen.

Ethnic Tamil politicians, warning that the beleaguered rebels would simply turn to guerrilla warfare, appealed for an end to the fighting and for new talks to resolve the Indian Ocean island nation's ethnic conflict.

"The noble need of the hour is an honest political solution. But it looks that we are far away from nobility," said Mano Ganesan, an opposition Tamil lawmaker.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent homeland for Tamils, who have suffered decades of marginalization by governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. The conflict has killed more than 70,000 people.

International mediators, including the United States, have long called for a political solution, saying that warfare will not resolve the underlying tensions between the two groups.

Series of powerful quakes kills 3 in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A series of powerful earthquakes at dawn killed at least three people and injured dozens more in remote eastern Indonesia on Sunday, cutting power lines and badly damaging buildings.

A 7.6-magnitude quake struck at 4:43 a.m. local time (1943 GMT) about 85 miles (135 kilometers) from Manokwari, Papua, at a depth of 22 miles (35 kilometers), the U.S. Geological Agency said. It was followed by a strong 7.5 aftershock.

Three bodies were found including a 10-year-old girl, hospital director Hengky Tewu told The Associated Press.

"Her head was crushed. We have our ambulances picking up two more," he said. Another 19 patients at the hospital were treated for broken bones, cuts, crushed fingers and other injuries.

■■■

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Officials say a strong earthquake has hit northeastern Afghanistan, a quake that rattled the capital Kabul for about a minute.

The U.S. Geological Survey says Sunday's quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.2 and was located in the northeastern province of Badakhshan in the Hindu Kush mountains. The area is often hit by earthquakes but is sparsely populated.

A Badakhshan police official, Fazel Ahmad Naderi, says the quake was strong but noted that his cell phone still worked, meaning that towers had not been toppled. The quake hit about 12:50 a.m. local time and Naderi says he won't know about damage until daylight.

The quake rattled buildings in Kabul, about 160 miles southwest of the epicenter.

■■■

Papua police chief Maj. Gen. Bagus Ekodanto said he received reports that a hotel and rice warehouse had been "destroyed," but he did not know if anyone had died.

Attempts were under way to search for possible victims.

Several stories of the Mutiara Hotel in the main city Manokwari collapsed, said Ina, a nurse at a navy hospital treating 20 quake patients. Like many Indonesians she goes by a single name.

Report: Kim Jong Il wishes troops happy new year

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Il paid a new year's visit to soldiers from a leading tank unit in his first reported public appearance of 2009, state-run media reported Saturday.

The dispatch did not specify the exact location of Kim's military visit but said the leader "congratulated service persons on the new year." A photo released by the Korean Central News Agency showed Kim peering out a window, a pair of binoculars on the table before him.

Kim, 66, is believed to have suffered a stroke in August. His failure to appear at a parade marking North Korea's 60th anniversary—and his subsequent disappearance from the public eye for some 50 days—sparked speculation about his health.

North Korea denies the reports and since early October has sent a steady stream of photos and footage of Kim chronicling what appears to be a busy wintertime tour of military units, farms and factories.

"It seems as though they are trying to prove outside speculations wrong regarding the state of Kim's health. They want to show that Kim is fully in control of his regime," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor of North Korean studies at Seoul's Dongguk University.

However, most of the reports and photos do not specify the exact location or date, making it hard for outside officials to confirm their veracity. State-run TV has not shown any live footage that could confirm Kim's reported health, and some images released in October appeared to have been doctored or taken months before he reportedly fell ill.

AP

In this undated Korean Central News Agency photo released by Korea News Service in Tokyo Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, wearing glasses, looks on during his visit to the Guard Seoul Ryu Kyong Su Tank Division 105 in undisclosed location, North Korea.

Kim's health is of keen interest because he rules the nation of 23 million people with absolute authority and has not publicly named a successor. Kim inherited leadership of the Stalinist regime upon his father's death in 1994.

South Korean officials, who in September cited intelligence indicating Kim had suffered a stroke but was recovering, said they cannot confirm Kim's current condition. But last week, Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong said he believed the country's leadership was "stable."

Officials: Pakistan arrests senior Taliban figure

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan has arrested a former Taliban spokesman who was released by Afghanistan in 2007 in exchange for a kidnapped Italian journalist, intelligence officials said Saturday—a high-profile catch at a time when many in the West are concerned tension with India could distract Pakistan from fighting militants on the Afghan border.

Taliban leader Mullah Omar sent his former spokesman, Ustad Mohammed Yasir, to Pakistan last year to mediate between two Taliban groups in the Mohmand tribal area on the Afghan border, an intelligence official said.

Many Taliban and al-Qaida militants fled to Pakistan in 2001 after the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime. The U.S. has pushed Pakistan to crack down on the militants, who have regrouped in the country's northwest and have been launching attacks against Western forces across the border in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani military has launched several operations along the Afghan border, including one earlier this week to secure the main supply route for U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan. But many in the West have questioned Islamabad's willingness to target the Taliban because Pakistan backed the hardline regime before its ouster.

Pakistan's recent decision to redeploy troops away from the Afghan border toward India following tension over the deadly Mumbai attacks has heightened concerns that the fight against militants could languish. India has blamed Pakistani militants for the November attacks in India's commercial capital that killed more than 160 people.

Pakistan first arrested Yasir in 2005 and sent him to Afghanistan, where he was released along with four other Taliban members in exchange for Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo, an intelligence official said.

World

Israeli ground troops invade Gaza to halt rockets

AP
Israel infantry soldiers gather on the border just before leaving Israel for the northern Gaza Strip, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009.

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Thousands of Israeli troops backed by columns of tanks and helicopter gunships launched a ground offensive in Gaza Saturday night, with officials saying they expected a lengthy fight in the densely populated territory after eight days of punishing airstrikes failed to halt militant rocket attacks on Israel.

The incursion set off fierce clashes with Palestinian militants and Gaza's Hamas rulers vowed the coastal strip would be a "graveyard" for Israelis forces.

"This will not be easy and it will not be short," Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said on national television about two hours after ground troops moved in.

The night sky over Gaza was lit by the flash of bullets and balls of fire from tank shells. Sounds of explosions were heard across Gaza City, the territory's biggest city, and high-rise buildings shook from the bigger booms.

Troops with camouflage face paint marching single file. As the ground troops moved in, Israel kept pounding Gaza with airstrikes. F-16 warplanes hit three targets within a few minutes, including a main Hamas security compound.

Witnesses in Gaza said that in the first phase, Israeli ground forces had moved several hundred yards inside Gaza. Israeli security officials said initial clashes with militants took place in open fields and soldiers did not immediately move into Gaza's crowded cities, where warfare would likely get much deadlier.

"We have many, many targets," Israeli army spokeswoman Maj. Avital Leibovich told CNN. "To my estimation, it will be a lengthy operation."

Israeli leaders said the operation, known as Cast Lead, was meant to quell militant rocket and mortar fire on southern Israel. They said it would not end quickly but that the objective was not to reoccupy Gaza or topple Hamas. The depth and intensity will depend in part on parallel diplomatic efforts that so far haven't yielded a truce proposal acceptable to Israel, the officials said.

In the airborne phase of Israel's onslaught, militants were not deterred from bombarding southern Israel with more than 400 rockets—including dozens that extended deeper into Israel than ever before. They fired six rockets into Israel in the first few hours after the ground push began, the military said.

One rocket scored a direct hit on a house in the southern city of Ashkelon earlier Saturday and another struck a bomb shelter there, leaving its aboveground entrance scarred by shrapnel and blasting a parked bus.

US *blocks* UN *Security Council action on Gaza*

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The United States late Saturday blocked approval of a U.N. Security Council statement calling for an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel and expressing concern at the escalation of violence between Israel and Hamas.

U.S. deputy ambassador Alejandro Wolff said the United States saw no prospect of Hamas abiding by last week's council call for an immediate end to the violence. Therefore, he said, a new statement at this time "would not be adhered to and would have no underpinning for success, would not do credit to the council."

France's U.N. Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert, the current council president, announced that there was no agreement among members on a statement. But he said there were "strong convergences" among the 15 members to express serious concern about the deteriorating situation in Gaza and the need for "an immediate, permanent and fully respected cease-fire."

Arab nations demanded that the council adopt a statement calling for an immediate cease-fire following Israel's launch of a ground offensive in Gaza earlier Saturday, a view echoed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Libya's U.N. Ambassador Giadalla Ettalhi, the only Arab member of the council, said the United States objected to "any outcome" during the closed council discussions on the proposed statement.

He said efforts were made to compromise and agree on a weaker press statement but there was no consensus.

European protesters urge end to offensive on Gaza

LONDON (AP)—Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in European cities on Saturday against Israel's bombardment of Gaza, including protesters who hurled shoes at the tall iron gates outside the British prime minister's residence in London.

Amid increasing criticism of Israel, international diplomatic efforts are growing to end the strikes, which have killed more than 460 people and left 1,700 injured. Late Saturday, Israel launched a ground offensive, sending tanks and infantry into Gaza.

In London, at least 10,000 people, many carrying Palestinian flags, marched past Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Downing Street residence to a rally in Trafalgar Square. Outside Downing Street, hundreds of protesters stopped and threw shoes at the gates that block entry to the narrow road.

Shoe-throwing has become a popular gesture of protest and contempt since an Iraqi journalist pelted U.S. President George W. Bush with a pair of brogues in Baghdad last month.

Police estimated the crowd in London at 10,000 to 12,000, but organizers said the number was much higher. The marchers included activist Bianca Jagger, ex-Eurythmics singer Annie Lennox and comedian Alexei Sayle.

"As a Jew, it's very moving to see so many people who are so outraged at Israel's actions," Sayle said. "Israel is a democratic country that is behaving like a terrorist organization."

After the rally, about 5,000 protesters marched on the Israeli Embassy in west London. Some youths burned Israeli flags and scuffled with police and hurled bottles and sticks at officers in riot gear. Several demonstrators were led away by police after leaping over metal barriers holding them back from the embassy.

Protest organizers accused police of charging into groups of demonstrators on the way to the embassy, and said they would file a complaint.

Rallies also were held in other British cities—including Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow—and across Europe. Protests in Paris, Amsterdam, Rome and Berlin all drew thousands of people.

In Paris, police said 21,000 marched through the streets, shouting "We are all Palestinians" and "Israel assassin." Later, about 500 of the protesters turned violent, throwing objects at police, burning Israeli flags, overturning and torching cars, and vandalizing several shops, police said. Ten police officers were injured in the clashes and 20 protesters arrested, a Paris police spokeswoman said.

Marines in combat still seek a better flak vest

BAGHDAD (AP)—Acting on widespread complaints from its troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps has ordered major modifications to its body armor to improve comfort, mobility and safety, The Associated Press has learned.

The decision results from a survey of more than 1,000 Marines, many of whom reported that their flak jackets, which cost the Marine Corps more than $100 million, were too heavy and restrictive.

"The Marine Corps is developing an Improved Modular Tactical Vest to address the problem areas uncovered by the survey results," Capt. Geraldine Carey, a Marine spokeswoman, told the AP by e-mail last week.

Earlier in 2008, the Marine Commandant, Gen. James Conway, temporarily suspended an order for more than 20,000 of the so-called Modular Tactical Vests.

"I've worn the vest on my travels into Iraq and Afghanistan, and I can tell you those Marines have raised some valid points," Conway told the AP by e-mail.

Body armor has been an issue since the Iraq war began in 2003. The Army reportedly had a shortage of the ceramic protective plates needed to make vests effective, and lawmakers demanded answers from the Department of Defense after reports surfaced of soldiers' families buying the plates themselves and sending them to Iraq.

The Marine Corps has been ahead in distributing adequate body armor and replacement parts to its troops, though it too has struggled to adapt and fine-tune the technology in an ever-changing urban warfare environment. The vest now used by the Marines in Iraq is the Corps' third since 2001. There are other lighter types of body armor that are widely used by police but they are not approved for combat. The Modular Tactical Vest, designed by the Marine Corps to improve on an older jacket, has a track record of stopping bullets and shrapnel.

WORLD BRIEFS

Opposition leader wins presidency in Ghana

ACCRA, Ghana (AP)—Opposition leader John Atta Mills was declared Ghana's next president Saturday in a peaceful ballot that secured the West African nation's place as a beacon of democracy on a volatile continent. The country is one of the few in Africa to successfully transfer power twice from one legitimately elected leader to another, proof that Ghana's democracy has truly matured after an era of coups and dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s. But tensions still ran high in what became the closest vote in Ghana's history, and some feared violence could erupt as it did earlier this year in Kenya—an East African nation that also was a model of stability until a similarly tight 2007 ballot unleashed weeks of tribal bloodshed. Ghana's ruling party candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo, had threatened to reject the results, but withdrew his court challenges and conceded peacefully. President John Kufuor appealed on both sides to accept the outcome and his call appeared aimed at his own governing party.

Mexican warlock predicts US troops on border

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico's self-proclaimed "Grand Warlock" says the United States will pull troops out of Iraq in 2009 and send them to the border with Mexico in an attempt to expand its territory. The prediction from Antonio Vazquez comes with a word of warning though: his record of projecting the future is spotty at best. Vazquez has been making predictions since 1980 on events ranging from international events to the private lives of celebrities, based on his reading of tarot cards. Vazquez erroneously predicted last year that oil prices would be stable and that Cuba's Fidel Castro and singer Britney Spears would die. This year, he says Spears will continue to triumph.

Health & Fitness

A rare but nasty risk lurking in hot springs

By HUGO MARTIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

The hike is long and dusty, across two miles of shrub-strewn California high desert.

But Lisa Fernandez, a Web designer and hot springs enthusiast, has often made the trek from the trail head to the pools of steaming water. She believes the payoff is worth it: a day of soaking in undeveloped, natural hot springs in the shade of pine and willow trees at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The naturally heated water at the Deep Creek Hot Springs increases her heart rate, soothes her tense muscles and, she says, detoxifies her skin. "I just love it," she said.

But just as nature lovers swarm to Deep Creek and other rustic hot-water oases to stave off the chills of winter, a spate of tainted-water fatalities and related studies have raised questions about the health risks of soaking in hot springs.

In April, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assigned a team of scientists and physicians to study a recent spike in deaths caused by Naegleria fowleri, an amoeba found naturally in bodies of warm, fresh water, such as lakes and hot springs. The group was formed in response to six deaths in 2007 in Arizona, Florida and Texas, all attributed to the amoeba, which typically enters the body through the nasal passages and then attacks brain tissue.

Infections are almost always fatal. Between 1998 and 2007, the U.S. recorded 33 cases; all but one was fatal, according to the CDC. The six deaths in 2007 represented the sixth-highest annual number of cases in the past 70 years.

Anxiety over the infection grew when Naegleria fowleri claimed another victim this summer, a 9-year-old boy, who officials believe contracted the amoeba while swimming in Lake Elsinore in California's Riverside County.

The recent CDC research could not explain what caused the spike in Naegleria fowleri cases in 2007. And the group warned that, although the number of infections has been relatively low compared with the millions of swimmers who enter warm freshwater pools each year, scientists still don't know why certain people get infected and what concentration of amoeba in the water poses a significant risk. The CDC group recommended public health agencies disseminate more information about the infection.

In a separate study conducted in 2003 by Montana State University, researchers tested the waters at 23 hot springs in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks and found Naegleria fowleri and other amoebas present in the hot-water pools.

The study concluded that the amoeba is not a transient organism but rather thrives in some hot springs. "These amoebae may pose health risks to people who use the hot springs for recreation," according to the study, published in Applied and Environmental Biology in October 2003.

In fact, three cases of Naegleria fowleri infection (known as primary amoebic meningoencephalitis, or PAM) have been contracted at Fernandez's favorite hot spring, Deep Creek, since 1971, according to the CDC. The U.S. Forest Service has since posted a sign near the pools, warning about the dangers of the amoeba infection.

Overall, health officials note, the odds of infection from Naegleria fowleri are slim and can be reduced to nearly nil with the proper precautions.

And of the 121 cases (all but one were fatal) of Naegleria fowleri reported in the United States from 1937 to 2007, four have been tied to hot springs, according to the CDC. By comparison, there were more than 36,000 drowning deaths in the U.S. between 1996 and 2005, according to the CDC.

"It's a very rare disease but obviously deadly," said Dr. Michael Beach, who co-chaired the CDC working group.

The amoeba can survive in just about the hottest water that humans can tolerate, Beach said. The Deep Creek hot spring usually bubbles up at a steamy 103 degrees.

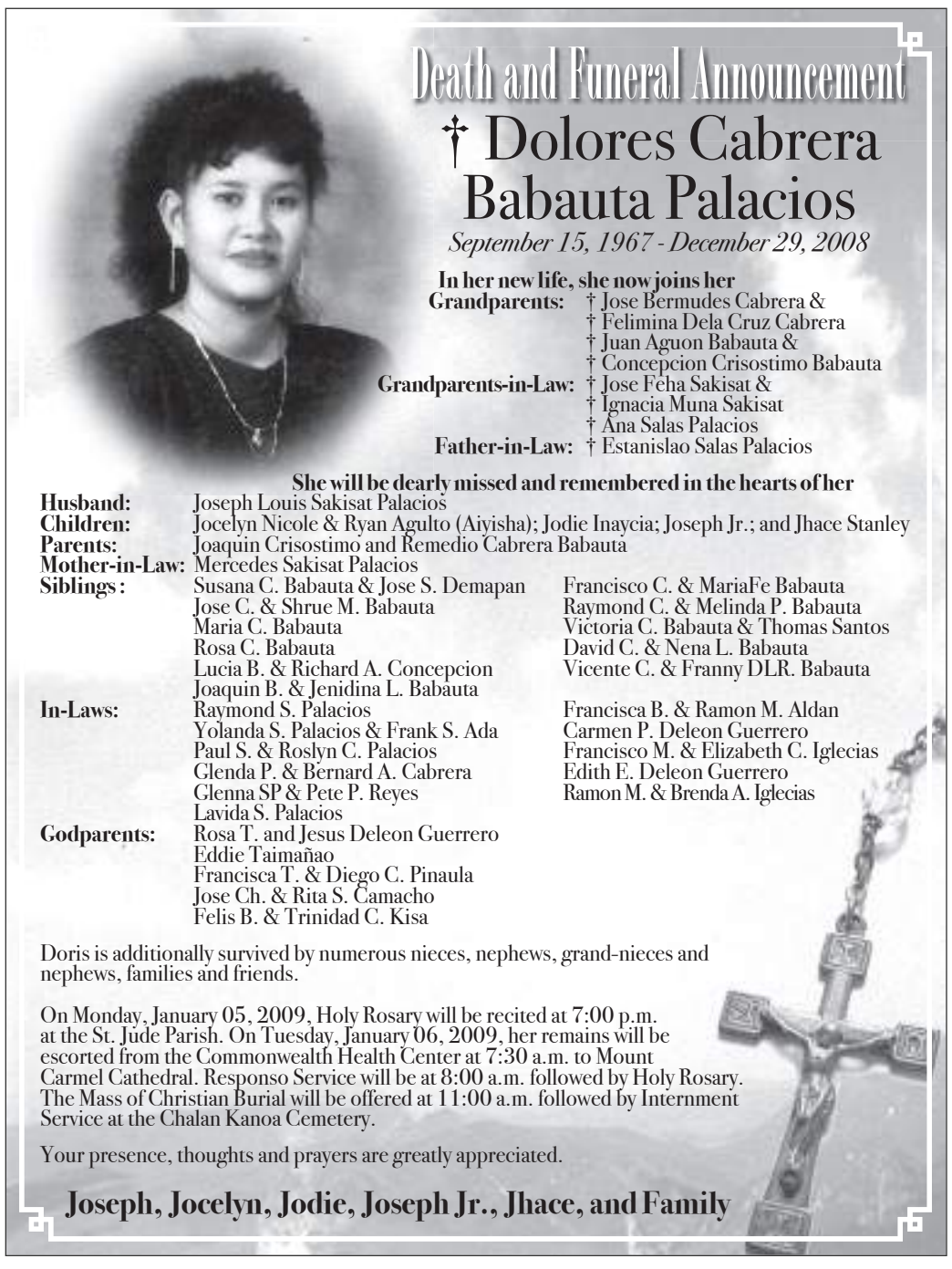
So why do so many more infections occur after swimming in warm lakes and rivers than in hot springs? Beach points out that the amoeba enters through the nose, and so swimmers who splash or submerge themselves in the water are more likely to get infected. Hot springs enthusiasts typically soak quietly, without submerging their heads.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

The amoeba thrives in even the hottest water temperatures at Deep Creek, in California's San Bernardino Forest. Infection can lead to death within a few days of the appearance of symptoms.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Chad Dupraw and Mary Llewellyn snack in a hot springs pool in Mammoth Lakes. Soakers who keep their heads dry are safer from the water-borne amoeba.



Death and Funeral Announcement

† Dolores Cabrera Babauta Palacios

September 15, 1967 - December 29, 2008

In her new life, she now joins her

Grandparents: † Jose Bermudes Cabrera & † Felimina Dela Cruz Cabrera; † Juan Aguon Babauta & † Concepcion Crisostimo Babauta

Grandparents-in-Law: † Jose Feha Sakisat & † Ignacia Muna Sakisat; † Ana Salas Palacios

Father-in-Law: † Estanislao Salas Palacios

She will be dearly missed and remembered in the hearts of her

Husband: Joseph Louis Sakisat Palacios

Children: Jocelyn Nicole & Ryan Agulto (Aiyisha); Jodie Inaycia; Joseph Jr.; and Jhace Stanley

Parents: Joaquin Crisostimo and Remedio Cabrera Babauta

Mother-in-Law: Mercedes Sakisat Palacios

Siblings: Susana C. Babauta & Jose S. Demapan; Jose C. & Shrue M. Babauta; Maria C. Babauta; Rosa C. Babauta; Lucia B. & Richard A. Concepcion; Joaquin B. & Jenidina L. Babauta; Francisco C. & MariaFe Babauta; Raymond C. & Melinda P. Babauta; Victoria C. Babauta & Thomas Santos; David C. & Nena L. Babauta; Vicente C. & Franny DLR. Babauta

In-Laws: Raymond S. Palacios; Yolanda S. Palacios & Frank S. Ada; Paul S. & Roslyn C. Palacios; Glenda P. & Bernard A. Cabrera; Glenna SP & Pete P. Reyes; Lavida S. Palacios; Francisca B. & Ramon M. Aldan; Carmen P. Deleon Guerrero; Francisco M. & Elizabeth C. Iglecias; Edith E. Deleon Guerrero; Ramon M. & Brenda A. Iglecias

Godparents: Rosa T. and Jesus Deleon Guerrero; Eddie Taimañao; Francisca T. & Diego C. Pinaula; Jose Ch. & Rita S. Camacho; Felis B. & Trinidad C. Kisa

Doris is additionally survived by numerous nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and nephews, families and friends.

On Monday, January 05, 2009, Holy Rosary will be recited at 7:00 p.m. at the St. Jude Parish. On Tuesday, January 06, 2009, her remains will be escorted from the Commonwealth Health Center at 7:30 a.m. to Mount Carmel Cathedral. Responso Service will be at 8:00 a.m. followed by Holy Rosary. The Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 11:00 a.m. followed by Internment Service at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Joseph, Jocelyn, Jodie, Joseph Jr., Jhace, and Family

Hot springs' extreme temperature swings can be deadly

By HUGO MARTIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Perhaps a greater health risk than a rare amoeba in hot springs is the danger of extreme temperature changes, from tepid to scalding in minutes.

In general, the pools can hold temperatures of up to 140 degrees and hotter.

In some hot springs, the water is heated when surface water seeps into fissures hundreds of feet below, making contact with super-heated magma and then percolating to the surface. Water temperatures drop when mineral deposits underground block ground water from fractures leading to the magma. But when new fractures open or mineral deposits loosen due to seismic activity, water temperatures can shoot up dramatically in seconds.

Such is the case at a popular swimming hole along Hot Creek near Northern California's Mammoth Mountain, a dormant volcano in the Eastern Sierra. Hot Creek and several hot springs pools near the mountain draw many bathers each year. But federal parks officials have fenced off Hot Creek and banned swimming there because of the risk of extreme temperature changes. More than a dozen people have been killed or scalded in the creek since the 1960s, according to signs posted around the creek.

Still, hot springs fans regularly ignore the signs and scale the fences to soak.

Lisa Fernandez and other hot springs enthusiasts suggest bathers use a thermometer, tied to a string, to test water temperatures before entering.

"The more rustic the hot spring, the more you have to be careful," she said. "But just use your best judgment."

Life & Style

'Shadow' illustrator Cartier dies at 94

RAMSEY, N.J. (AP)—Edward D. Cartier, whose illustrations graced "The Shadow" and numerous other science fiction and mystery publications in a career that spanned several decades, has died at 94.

Cartier died Dec. 25 at his home in Ramsey, according to his son, Dean Cartier. The elder Cartier had suffered from Parkinson's disease in recent years, his son said.

Cartier's artwork appeared in works by authors such as Robert A. Heinlein and Isaac Asimov, but he is perhaps best known for the hundreds of illustrations he did for "The Shadow" in the 1930s and 1940s.

Written by Walter B. Gibson, "The Shadow" novels appeared in pulp magazines and detailed the exploits of a mysterious, black-attired crime fighter.

Cartier began doing illustrations for the novels in 1936. Not long after that, he turned down an offer to be an assistant to Norman Rockwell, according to Anthony Tollin, editor of "The Shadow & Doc Savage" reprint trade paperbacks.

In addition to more than 800 illustrations for "The Shadow," Cartier drew hundreds of illustrations for numerous other science fiction magazines. He also was the premier artist for the Fantasy Press and Gnome Press book publishing houses in the 1950s.

Dean Cartier said his father created a Christmas card that he sent to family and friends each year starting in the late 1970s. The last one, drawn in 2005, depicted Santa Claus handing "The Shadow" a gift.

Austrian author Johannes Mario Simmel dies at 84

ZUG, Switzerland (AP)—Austrian-born author Johannes Mario Simmel, whose books are said to have sold more than 70 million copies worldwide, died in the Swiss town where he lived, a local official said Friday. He was 84.

Simmel died in a care home in Zug, near Zurich, on Thursday, town clerk Irene Schwendimann said, without giving the cause of death or any further details.

Simmel's books regularly topped German-language best-seller lists before Nobel laureates such as Heinrich Boell and Guenter Grass.

His works include the World War II spy novel "It can't always be caviar" and the Cold War thriller "Dear Fatherland."

Many of his books were translated into other languages, and the play "TheClassmate" was adapted for Broadway.

AP

This March 18, 2005 file picture shows Austrian author Johannes Mario Simmel in Berne, Switzerland.

Born in 1924 in the Austrian capital Vienna, Simmel trained as a chemical engineer before discovering his talent for writing. He published his first novel in 1949 while working as a translator for the American military administration in postwar Austria.

Most of his father's family, who were of Jewish origin, died in the Holocaust, and Simmel was a lifelong campaigner against racism and fascism.

A funeral will be held in Zug in coming days, Schwendimann said.

Simmel was married three times. Information about survivors was not immediately available.

Bahamas using 2 experts for Travolta son autopsy

FREEPORT, Bahamas (AP)—The Bahamas will use two pathologists to ensure a careful autopsy on John Travolta's son, who died at the actor's vacation home in Grand Bahama, the territory's health minister said Saturday.

Dr. Hubert Minnis told The Associated Press that he decided to use a second specialist to guarantee a thorough assessment of what might have caused Jett Travolta's death.

The 16-year-old was found collapsed in a bathroom on Friday after having a seizure and hitting his head on the bathtub, said a police officer who declined to be named because she was not authorized to speak on the matter.

He was taken by ambulance to a Freeport hospital, where he was pronounced dead, police Superintendent Basil Rahming said in a statement.

A U.S.-certified clinical and forensic pathologist from Nassau will fly into Grand Bahama on Monday to help perform the autopsy, Minnis said. A possible cause of death likely will be known by the end of the day, he said.

The Bahamas is a haven for celebrities and Minnis himself was an obstetrician for Anna Nicole Smith, the former Playboy playmate who died from an accidental drug overdose and is buried in the Bahamas alongside her son.

AP

This Feb. 24, 2008 file photo shows John Travolta and Kelly Preston on the red carpet during the 80th Annual Academy Awards, held at Kodak Theater in Hollywood, California.

John Travolta is trying to finish funeral arrangements and hopes to fly his son's body to Florida by midweek, said Michael McDermott, the actor's corporate and commercial attorney.

Travolta, 54, and his wife, actress Kelly Preston, 46, have a house in Ocala, Florida.

"It's heart-wrenching," McDermott said. "If you knew how much he loved that boy ... It was almost palpable. It was that strong."

Security was tight Saturday at the lavish Old Bahama Bay resort community, where Travolta owns a home.

"We are taking great steps to protect Travolta's privacy," resort spokesman Ryan Julison said. "Security is heightened because media is attempting to access the property."

The family arrived on a private plane Tuesday and apparently had invited 60 friends for the New Year's holiday weekend, including McDermott. It is unclear whether Travolta, a pilot, had flown his family in.

Jett was the couple's oldest child. They also have an 8-year-old daughter, Ella Bleu.

In Celebration of Her New Life

Susana Sablan Camacho Villagomez

Fondly known as "Chana/Nan Chana/Chana Juan Kiyu"
August 3, 1918 — December 29, 2008

In her new life, she now joins:

Husband:	†Juan Seman Villagomez
Father/Mother:	†Luis Taimanao Camacho & +Ramona Reyes Sablan Camacho
Father/Mother-in-law:	†Manuel Castro Villagomez & +Antonia Seman Villagomez

Brothers/Sisters/In-laws/Nephews and Nieces:

†Vicente Sablan Camacho
†Albert Sablan & †Primitiva Lg. Camacho
†Mariana Camacho & †Francisco C. Deleon Guerrero
†Ricardo T. Borja
†Joaquin & †Soledad Villagomez
†Jesus & †Joaquina Villagomez
†Jose & †Antonia Villagomez
†Vicente & +Rosalia Villagomez
†Luise P. Villagomez
†Anuncia F. Camacho
†Max C. Deleon Guerrero
†Carlos Patrick P. Camacho Jr.
†Vertilia C. Guerrero

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Reared daughter:	Nora Villagomez & Raymond Lg. Borja & Family
Sisters:	Antonia Sablan Camacho & Family
	Trinidad Camacho Borja & Family
	Margarita Sablan Camacho
	Benita Camacho & Jerry Kortz & Family
Brothers:	Froilan Sablan & Maria Smith Camacho & Family
	Carlos Sablan & Lourdes (Winnie) P. Camacho & Family
Brother-in-law:	Manuel Seman Villagomez & Family
Sisters-in-law:	Estefania Flores Camacho & Family
	Rosario Arriola Camacho & Family
Caregiver:	Trinidad C. Butardo

She is also survived by numerous cousins, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, god-sons, and god-daughters.

Daily mass of intentions is offered every 6:00 a.m. at Kristo Rai Church. Nightly rosary is being said at 7:30 p.m. at Kristo Rai Church.

On Tuesday, January 6, 2009, her body will be escorted from the Borja's Funeral Home to Kristo Rai Church at 7:00 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:00 a.m. followed by the interment services at the Mount Carmel Cemetery in Chalan Kanoa.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase and Thank You for your thoughts and prayers.

From the Family

Recording studio in hospital about more than music

HOUSTON (AP)—Just down the hall from the chemo infusion rooms at Texas Children's Hospital, Jalen Huckabay was about to slip into another world, away from the wearying regimen of pokes, prods and pinches she'd endured since being diagnosed with lymphoma in November.

For the next few hours, the curly-haired, cherub-faced 16-year-old would become a songwriter.

Purple Songs Can Fly, a one-of-a-kind program at one of the country's largest pediatric cancer care facilities, gives patients a chance to record their own songs in a fully equipped recording studio at the hospital.

More than 116 songs have been recorded since Purple Songs began in March 2006 as part of the cancer center's Arts in Medicine program. Some of the recordings have been featured on audio tracks aboard Continental Airlines flights, and flown into space aboard the space shuttle.

Yet Jalen hesitated and hawed when her oncologist asked if she wanted to write and record a song. She wasn't sure what to expect. She is normally reserved, prone to one-word answers and prefers to stick close to her mother. She doesn't like singing in front of other people.

But she can talk for hours about Jasmine, the pint-size Yorkshire terrier she got as a Christmas present last year. The puppy she calls MYD. My Yippin' Dog.

Purple Songs founder Anita Kruse immediately knew that Jalen's words contained the kernels of a song, and that behind the girl's shy exterior, a creative spirit lurked.

"There's a point where the kids realize they are not thinking about anything else. It's just about being in that creative place," said Kruse, a Houston-based singer-songwriter who raised $10,000 to start Purple Songs, which is funded through donations. "Seeing someone going through something really difficult let that go, even if it's just for the moment, it's beautiful."

Jalen Huckabay, right, contemplates the song she is writing as her mother Karen, left, waits outside the studio door at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston Friday, Dec. 12, 2008.

AP

It had been an especially rough week for Jalen, who is no stranger to rough weeks. A few days earlier, a good friend and fellow transplant patient had died. Then, the day before Jalen's first double chemo session, her grandfather had open-heart surgery.

A rough week, coming at the end of a rough year.

In March, Jalen's doctor told her parents she would die within two months without a lung transplant. Her own lungs, weakened by cystic fibrosis, could no longer sustain her. It would be the second transplant for Jalen, who received a new liver four years ago.

"We just prayed that those lungs came quick," said Karen Huckabay, Jalen's mother.

A donor match—the lungs of a 19-year-old girl who died of an aneurysm—were found in eight days. The transplant was performed at Texas Children's, one of three hospitals in the country that perform pediatric lung transplants.

A few months later, an infection sent Jalen back to Texas Children's—she needed 17 operations over 11 weeks. In November, doctors detected a type of lymphoma that can occur in transplant recipients. They found post-transplant lymphoma in her tonsils and put Jalen on six-month course of chemotherapy.

For all but four weeks of 2008, Jalen and her mother have lived in an apartment near the hospital, 400 miles from home in Albany, Texas. Far from Jalen's father, her younger sister, her friends—and Jasmine.

That's why she wanted to write the song.

"I miss her very much," Jalen said of her pet.

Many of the children in Purple Songs write about their pets, or families, or other bits and pieces of home life.

"So many of them want to express gratitude and thanks to their friends or family or the doctors for being there for them, to that element of whatever is comforting during this time," said Kruse. "That dog is comforting for Jalen."

Inside the recording studio, Jalen reached into the purse dangling from the IV trolley and pulled out a cell phone. She wanted Kruse to see photos of her little Yorkie.

"Oh, she's adorable!" said Kruse. "Of course, she needs a song about her."

"So do you call her a puppy?" asked Kruse, as the two worked side-by-side in the cramped recording studio. Kruse sat at a Mac with a piano keyboard and Garage Band software. Jalen sat next to her beeping IV monitor, a protective face mask around her chin.

"We call her Jaz, Jasmine," replied Jalen, speaking barely above a whisper.

Kruse, her long flaxen hair reaching down the back of a long purple jacket, jotted Jalen's words onto her notepad with a purple-inked pen. Then she hummed softly. "Yipping dog ... she high fives ... twirls."

"She loves beef jerky," Jalen added, her muffled voice inching up just a notch. "If you give it to her from the bag, she'll be your best friend... If you pat your tummy, she'll jump into your arms."

"She's just a year old? Would you say her hair's curly?," asked Kruse. "When it's long, it curls?"

"We dressed her up in a Build-a-Bear wedding dress," laughed Jalen, the words tumbling out a little easier. "Whenever you give her a bath, she hates the towel. She attacks the towel."

Without realizing it, Jalen was composing lyrics. With each phrase, a new verse filled Kruse's notepad: "She does high fives. She sits. She twirls. If we let her hair grow, she has pretty curls."

Kruse gave Jalen a thumbs up. "That's one verse. Now we just need a chorus."

"You've got to have MYD. My yippin' dog," joked Jalen's mother.

Jalen and Kruse looked at each other. That was it. Kruse's pen flew across paper.

Critics pick 'Waltz With Bashir' as best '08 film

NEW YORK (AP)—"Waltz With Bashir," a groundbreaking animated documentary about Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, won the National Society of Film Critics' 2008 best picture award Saturday.

But "Happy-Go-Lucky," Mike Leigh's tale of a die-hard optimist whose worldview is put to the test, came away with four of the 10 awards for 2008 films. It won best director and best screenplay for Leigh, best actress for Sally Hawkins and best supporting actor for Eddie Marsan.

AP

In this May 15, 2008 file photo, Israeli writer and director Ari Folman, right, arrives with an unidentified guest for the premiere of his film "Waltz With Bashir" during the 61st International film festival in Cannes, southern France.

The critics' group also named Sean Penn as best actor for his performance in the biopic "Milk," about pioneering gay politician Harvey Milk.

Hanna Schygulla won best supporting actress for "The Edge of Heaven," a German-Turkish cross-cultural story of loss and forgiveness.

Intense and inventive, "Waltz With Bashir" follows Israeli director and former soldier Ari Folman's efforts to recover his own lost memories about a massacre during the war. It moves among interviews, dreams and flashbacks, all rendered in animation.

It beat "Happy-Go-Lucky" and the Pixar animated blockbuster "WALL-E" for the best-picture nod.

While "Waltz With Bashir" is drawn from real life, the best nonfiction film honor went to "Man on Wire," about high-wire artist Philippe Petit's daring trek between the World Trade Center's twin towers in 1974.

The best cinematography award went to "Slumdog Millionaire," a rags-to-riches story shot with hand-held digital cameras in the slums of Mumbai, India.

Ken Jacobs' "Razzle Dazzle," which chops up, blows up and reinvents a 1933 Thomas Edison film, won best experimental film.

Forty-nine of the society's 63 members cast their votes Saturday in a meeting at the venerable theater-district hangout Sardi's Restaurant. The group's selections often differ from those of Oscar voters.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Report: Overseas box office record broken

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hollywood's six major studios say they broke overseas box office records in 2008, with an estimated $9.9 billion in tickets sold. That's a 4 percent increase from a year earlier, The Hollywood Reporter said Friday. Each of the six majors—Paramount, Warner Bros., Universal, 20th Century Fox, Sony and Disney—collected more than $1 billion for the second year running. How much each collected depends on whether films were co-financed, how international rights deals were cut and how much went to theater owners. Paramount Pictures led the pack with international releases grossing $2 billion, up 28 percent, while Warner Bros.' movies grossed $1.8 billion. Universal grossed $1.7 billion, up 66 percent from a year ago.

Actor Sam Shepard suspected of DUI in Illinois

NORMAL, ILL. (AP)—Police in Illinois say actor and playwright Sam Shepard has been arrested on preliminary charges of speeding and drunken driving. Police Lt. Mark Kotte says officers stopped Shepard early Saturday in the central Illinois town of Normal. Kotte says the 65-year-old Shepard was driving 16 mph over the 30 mph speed limit. Kotte says a breath test indicated Shepard's blood-alcohol level was double the legal limit. Shepard told police he had been at a tavern in nearby Bloomington and was heading to a hotel. He said he was on his way to his home in Kentucky from Minnesota. Shepard won the 1979 Pulitzer Prize for drama for his play "Buried Child." He posted bail in Bloomington. A man who answered the jail phone said he did not know the amount of bail. Attempts to locate an attorney for Shepard were unsuccessful.

Heather Locklear gets probation in DUI case

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (AP)—Heather Locklear has evaded DUI charges by pleading to a lesser offense. A court official in Santa Barbara says an attorney for the actress entered a no contest plea to a misdemeanor reckless driving charge in court Friday. Locklear was given three years of informal probation, will pay a fine and attend a driver's education program, said Lee Carter, Santa Barbara senior deputy district attorney. Tests revealed no alcohol in Locklear's system following her September arrest, but prosecutors charged her in November with driving under the influence of prescription drugs. Locklear's attorney, Blair Berk, declined to comment Friday. The actress, whose credits include "Dynasty," "Melrose Place," did not appear.

Will Smith voted 2008's top moneymaking movie star

In this Dec. 9, 2008 file photo, actor Will Smith attends the premiere of "The Day The Earth Stood Still" in New York.

AP

NEW YORK (AP)—No name on the marquee was more pleasing to theater owners in 2008 than Will Smith, according to a survey of movie exhibitors. Smith, star of "Hancock" and "Seven Pounds," was voted the star who generated the most box office revenue for theaters in an annual survey by Quigley Publishing Co.

Smith is only the second black actor to be chosen in the Quigley poll, which since 1932 has asked movie exhibitors to vote on the 10 stars who brought in the most business. Sidney Poitier topped the poll in 1968.

Smith's superhero summer blockbuster, "Hancock," grossed $228 million. "Seven Pounds," currently in theaters, has pulled in a somewhat lackluster $39 million in two weeks.

Following Smith, in order, were Robert Downey Jr. ("Iron Man," "Tropic Thunder"), Christian Bale ("The Dark Knight"), Shia LaBeouf ("Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull") and LaBeouf's "Indiana Jones" co-star Harrison Ford.

The top 10 were rounded out by Adam Sandler, Reese Witherspoon, George Clooney, Angelina Jolie and Daniel Craig.

Last year's winner, Johnny Depp, who didn't have a film released this year, didn't make this year's poll, nor did seven-time winner Tom Cruise.

Anne Hathaway ("Rachel Getting Married") was voted the top "star of tomorrow" along with Chris Pine of "Bottle Shock."

Charlie Rose mistakenly declares friend dead

NEW YORK (AP)—Filmmaker George Butler wants his friends to know he's very much alive, despite a premature obituary on "The Charlie Rose Show" this week.

During Rose's annual New Year's Eve tribute on PBS to notable figures who died during the year, he included Butler, whose 1977 film "Pumping Iron" featured a then-unknown bodybuilder named Arnold Schwarzenegger. The screen even flashed a Butler tombstone, 1943-2008.

The PBS show had confused him with another George Butler, a longtime jazz record executive who signed Wynton Marsalis, who died April 9.

What's odd about the mistake is that Rose and Butler are old friends through Rose's first wife, meeting shortly after they graduated from college in North Carolina.

Butler, who lives in Holderness, N.H. and is making a film on Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, didn't see his obit but learned about it when a fellow filmmaker called. He found out that some friends in New York were even planning a wake.

AP

In this Sept. 10, 2008 file photo, television host Charlie Rose arrives at a benefit for the LeBron James Family Foundation at the Ralph Lauren mansion, in New York.

"I am bemused," he said. "Charlie did a great job in retracting the huge error. Still, it's very disconcerting."

At least he was in good company, Butler said, noting that he was featured with Paul Newman, Tim Russert and William F. Buckley. A contrite Rose was on the phone with him three times on New Year's Day to apologize, he said.

Rose, who did not immediately respond to e-mail messages seeking comment, apologized at the opening of Thursday's show.

"The George Butler who is my friend is alive and well and living in New Hampshire," Rose said. "We apologize to him and his friends, and look forward to having him on the program in the new year."

Bon Jovi to sing at NYC Hillary Clinton fundraiser

NEW YORK (AP)—The final note of Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential campaign may very well be sung by Jon Bon Jovi.

The musician is performing at a fundraiser for the former presidential candidate as she tries to close out her campaign debt, which stood at $6.3 million as of last month.

The Jan. 15 performance at Manhattan's Town Hall is being billed as "a final evening in support of Hillary Clinton for President Debt Relief." Ticket prices range from $75 to $1,000.

The former first lady and New York senator has been working to pay down her debt to clear the way for confirmation as President-elect Barack Obama's secretary of state. Federal ethics rules prohibit Cabinet officials from actively soliciting campaign contributions.

Clinton wrote off $13.1 million in personal loans to the campaign.

AP

Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., greets someone in the crowd at Times Square before she help to start the New Year's ball drop in New York, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2008.

Grateful Dead alums plan first tour in 5 years

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It looks like the old Dead are gettin' on.

Surviving members of the Grateful Dead say they'll regroup for a 19-city tour, their first since 2004, beginning April 12 in Greensboro, N.C.

The group, which now just calls itself The Dead, announced its plans Thursday.

Original band members Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann have toured sporadically since the 1995 death of guitarist Jerry Garcia, but struggled to get along personally and artistically. They told Rolling Stone in November that they've worked out their differences, aided by a successful October benefit concert in Pennsylvania for then-presidential candidate Barack Obama.

Warren Haynes joins the Dead on lead guitar, and Jeff Chimenti will play keyboards.

Bumbling behavior is a sore point between mother and son

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My son says I scold him so often it has given him a complex. He constantly loses things—coats, lunch boxes, expensive toys, games—and damages property such as computers, my furniture, etc. He doesn't do it on purpose. It "just happens" (I think) because he is clumsy and heavy-handed, sort of a bull in a china shop.

He often bumps into people—including me—and never says "Excuse me," or even appears to notice. At first I would speak to him about these incidents and make him apologize, but after a while I lost my patience and started getting angry. His behavior has continued through high school.

My son is now 19 and still living at home, and these things are still happening. What am I supposed to do? Sit back and say nothing? This morning we were getting into the car to go to work, and he swung his lunch bag around and hit me in the head with it. It contained cans of soda, and it hurt. When no reaction or apology was forthcoming, I said, "You hit me in the head with your lunch bag," and he went off again about always being a failure and everyone always finding fault with him.

FRUSTRATED MOM IN VIRGINIA

DEAR FRUSTRATED MOM: It may seem a little late to suggest this, but have you ever had your son evaluated for a psychological or neurological disorder? There may be a reason for his constantly losing things. As to his clumsiness, has his vision—specifically his depth perception—been checked by an eye-care specialist? Yes, accidents happen, but when they happen repeatedly, there may be an explanation for it other than klutziness or forgetfulness.

DEAR ABBY: I recently married a man my family and friends, and I, all thought was the perfect man/husband for me—or anyone, for that matter. We have been married less than two months, and I have undeniable proof that he is married to another woman in another state.

We received gifts from two showers—one given by some friends and another given by my co-workers. Should I give them back? I want to do the right thing. There are about 20 gifts and a small gift certificate.

So far, people who know my situation say I should keep them, but are they just being polite?

EMBARRASSED AND HEARTBROKEN IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR EMBARRASSED AND HEARTBROKEN: If they have not been used, the gifts should be offered to the people who gave them to you. However, if you have already done this and were told you should keep them, then that's what you should do. The gifts are yours to keep or dispose of as you wish, if you would prefer not to have hurtful reminders around.

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have been married 54 years. She is now 90 and I am 87, although we could both pass for 70. We have made love about once a week since the day we were married—yes, about 2,800 times. Is there any correlation between frequency of sex and lack of apparent aging?

FEELS LIKE A KID IN ARIZONA

DEAR KID: From everything I have read, regular cardiovascular exercise, lack of stress and a happy marriage contribute to a couple's health and well-being. Because a healthy sex life falls into all three categories, I think you're onto something.

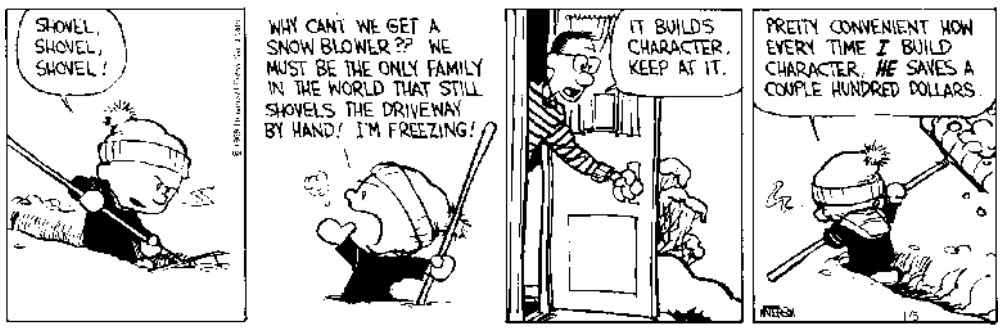
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

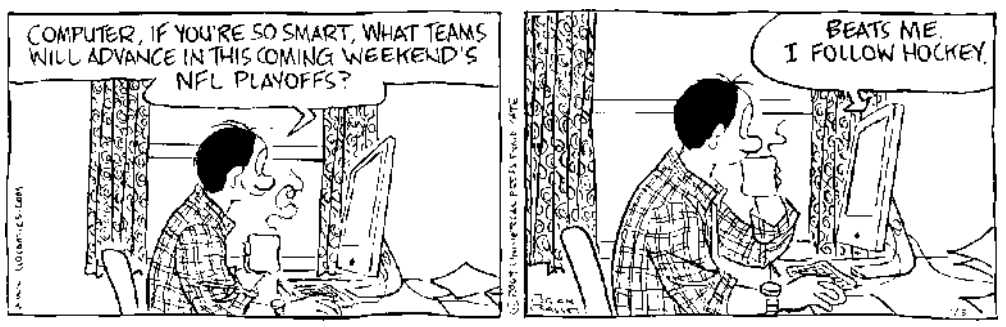

SHOVEL, SHOVEL, SHOVEL!
WHY CAN'T WE GET A SNOW BLOWER?? WE MUST BE THE ONLY FAMILY IN THE WORLD THAT STILL SHOVELS THE DRIVEWAY BY HAND! I'M FREEZING!
IT BUILDS CHARACTER. KEEP AT IT.
PRETTY CONVENIENT HOW EVERY TIME I BUILD CHARACTER, HE SAVES A COUPLE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

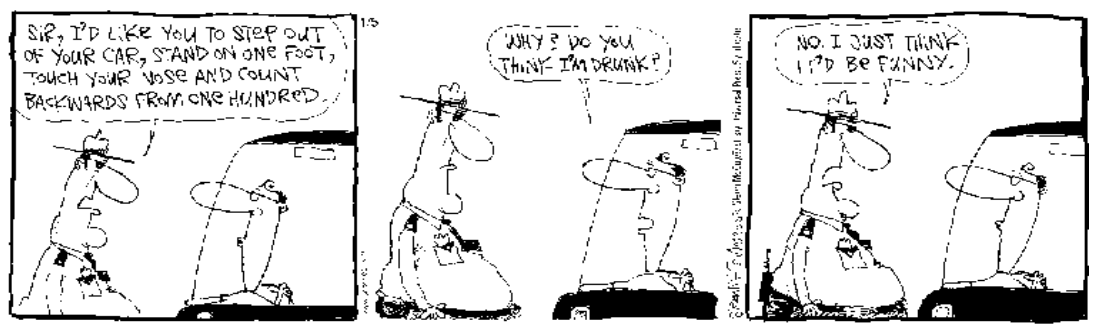
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


SIR, I'D LIKE YOU TO STEP OUT OF YOUR CAR, STAND ON ONE FOOT, TOUCH YOUR NOSE AND COUNT BACKWARDS FROM ONE HUNDRED.
WHY? DO YOU THINK I'M DRUNK?
NO. I JUST THINK I'D BE FUNNY.

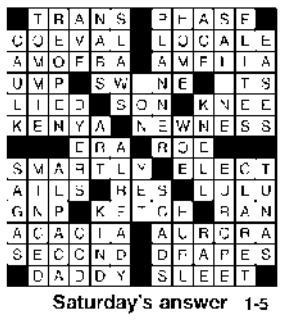
CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

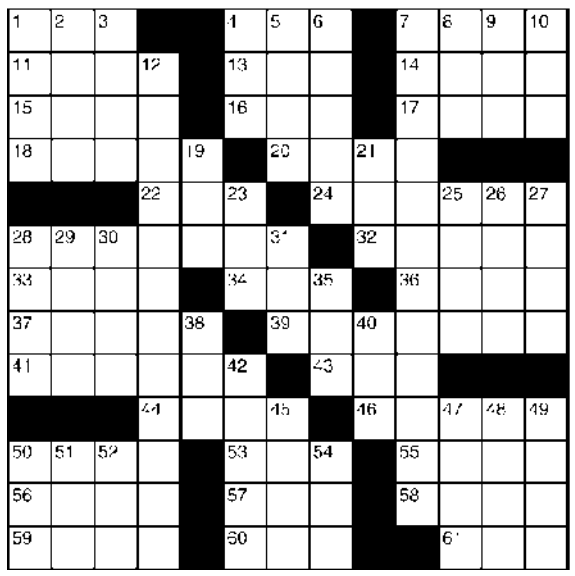
ACROSS
1 " gets too hungry ..."
4 Existed
7 Go sightseeing
11 Baby bovine
13 Frozen over
14 With competence
15 Approximately
16 Can metal
17 High-flying toy
18 Prepare to drive
20 Medicinal measurement
22 Ply oars
24 Online biz
28 Talk and talk and talk
32 Push hard
33 Wooden strip
34 Pooch
36 Divisible by two
37 Unfriendly
39 Novices on the golf course
41 High hit
43 X-ray descendant
44 San — Capistrano
46 Subsequently
50 Boyfriend
53 Gear tooth
55 Siamese
56 Badder than bad
57 Coloration
58 Towel designation
59 Change
60 Explosive letters
61 Wapiti

DOWN
1 Glaswegian, e.g.
2 Tortoise's opponent
3 Otherwise
4 Humor
5 Alkali neutralizer
6 Church council
7 Refuse to answer
8 Kimono sash
9 Last (Abbr.)
10 "The Catcher in the —"
12 Summer holiday
19 Cauldron
21 "Mayday!"
23 Marry
25 Inlet
26 Exceeding
27 Clothing store department
28 Applaud
29 Head light?
30 On
31 Scepter
35 Wrigley product
38 Winter ailment
40 Monk's address
42 Luxury craft
45 It may be a proper subject
47 Quaker's pronoun
48 "My Name Is —"
49 Put in jeopardy
50 Ms. Sills, to pals
51 Peron or Gabor
52 Melody
54 Obtain

Solution time: 24 mins.



Saturday's answer 1-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Marilyn Manson, 40; Pamela Sue Martin, 56; Diane Keaton, 63; Robert Duvall, 78

Happy Birthday: Your discipline and honesty will set a great example for someone wondering what to do next. A change will do you good. Emotional matters will have to be dealt with in order to move forward. Times are tight but your ability to take a little and turn it into something great will motivate everyone around you, enhancing your life. Your numbers are 6, 9, 17, 22, 29, 35, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Not everyone will be as open or giving as you are. Hold on to what you have. Caution while working is a must to avoid injury or arguments that will set you back. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You are in a position to show your talent, not talk about it. You can make a greater impact by taking action and the impression you make on someone you really like will certainly pay off. Your strength will come through your actions. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You can convince anyone of anything, so put on your best show and go out and sell yourself. A change of jobs, switching from one course to another or looking into a business deal will all be attainable if you act fast and with finesse. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): If you are passionate and precise, you will get ahead. Change may not be welcome at home but it will be necessary. Don't fight the inevitable but work with what you've got and you will succeed. Don't overspend. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You'll be confused. Don't let emotional matters cloud your vision or lead you in the wrong direction. Making unreasonable promises will come back to haunt you. Focus on what you can accomplish and you will avoid pitfalls. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You can do whatever you set your mind to. Don't give in when you don't have to. Play to win and you will. Love is on the rise, so pay proper attention to someone special and you will enjoy the comforts of a close relationship. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Be careful not to go overboard. Protect what you have instead of being left wide open for criticism and letting someone take advantage of you. Put your life in order instead of taking an unnecessary risk. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Not everyone will understand what it is you are trying to accomplish. Listen to suggestions and brace yourself to take on some challenges you weren't expecting. Love will conquer all and will keep your faith and strength intact. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be tempted by what others are doing and saying but, if you really look at the situation, you should recognize that talk and reality are not always the same. Think any ideas and plans through before taking a leap. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Think before you speak, act or make promises. You have to be sure about what you can and cannot do. Question what others promise as well. Now is not the time to make changes to your personal life. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Think about what you can do to get ahead. If that means picking up an extra project or job or even a skill, get busy doing so. You have to start somewhere, so work through whatever problems you face. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): It's what you do behind the scenes that will pay off. A partnership you cherish should be nurtured and treated with respect. Your knowledge of what others may be up to will guide you to a positive course of action. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are dedicated, loyal and caring. You are sensitive, intuitive, giving, determined and you always have a plan.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			9	2	6	3		
		1		3		6		
	3		8				4	2
7		2		4				6
5	6		1		8		2	3
1				5		9		8
6	5				3		1	
		7		8		2		
		8	4	6	7			

Difficulty Level ★ 1/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	5	9	7	1	8	2	6	3
6	3	7	5	9	2	4	1	8
1	8	2	4	6	3	7	5	9
7	1	4	9	2	6	3	8	5
5	6	3	1	8	7	9	2	4
9	2	8	3	5	4	1	7	6
8	4	6	2	7	9	5	3	1
2	9	1	8	3	5	6	4	7
3	7	5	6	4	1	8	9	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

GREAT SLAVE LAKE Solution: 9 letters

T P R E C N E D I V O R P A E
B E A U L I E U S H O R E X L
W N R C G D E T T A H R P W E
A I A R I G D S D N A L S I V
L N N D I T E A T R O U T L A
L S G T A T C D P R P R M D T
E U E D E N O R E E E E S L I
Y L G S E R A R A K S S K I O
E A N R E N S C I N E O A F N
W O R A A T E H O E H L Y E T
W A S P R Y T O A B S U A C S
B C T E I D L L K E R T K E E
A A A E V K N I E A A I R N R
Y M Z D R O E U N R M O A O O
S P E Z I S C I T G S N P E F

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Arctic, Area, Barren, Bays, Bear, Beaulieu, Camp, Canada, Coves, Deep, Dene, Dettah, Elevation, Explorers, Forest, Fort, Gray, ng, Hike, Islands, Kayaks, Loons, Marshes, Paddle, Park, Peace, Peninsula, Pike, Providence, Range, Resolution, Rugged, Settlers, Shore, Size, Snow, Streams, Territories, Trout, Tundra, Walleye, Waters, Wildlife, Winter

Last Saturday's Answer: Cafeteria

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, FF, AC, 24-hr pwr./water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. MIHA applicants accepted. Right behind NMC campus. Special rates for NMC faculty/students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

Apartment for rent: Brand new studio type apartment, across NMC & Riviera Hotel, brand new…furnished, air-conditioner, water heater, refrigerator, free wi-fi internet. Only $200/month. Contact: Danny @ 287-2387.

WHATZIT Solution:
Blow hot and cold

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF HAWAII, Plaintiff, vs. **SYLVIA ARRIOLA PE and RENATO S. PE,** Defendants.	)	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-0455** **NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Amended Order issued by the Court in this matter on November 5, 2008, I will sell, at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property:

EA 415-3 NEW-3, (formerly part of EA 415-3 NEW, which was part of original EA 415), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2026/89, the original of which was recorded 07 DEC 88 as Document No. 88-3910 at Commonwealth Recorder's, Saipan.

Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on January 9th, 2009, at the hour of 9:00a.m., at the Carlsmith Ball LLP, Carlsmith Building, Capitol Hill, Isa Drive, P.O. Box 5241, Saipan, MP 96950-5241. The sale will be opened to general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

Dated: Saipan, MP, December 18, 2008.

/s/ Vincent J. Seman
Attorneys for Plaintiff

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

House for long term lease. Location: Capitol Hill, along Isa Drive. 3-Bedrooms, 2-1/2 Bath. Fenced all around with gates. Contact: e-mail: florebalecha@cox.net, Cell: (670) 788-6584.

Apartment room for rent. 2 bedroom. Located in Koblerville. $210. Tel: # 288-0728. Yoon Won Suck.

FOR SALE-COMMERCIAL

Beauty Salon
For Sale
Contact Tel.: # 234-1118

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff, -v- JOHN KITALONG SIKYANG and MERCEDES JONES CASTRO, DefendantS.	: : : : : : :	CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-419

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 22, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 045 A 12, situated in As Matuis, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 944 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 045 A 002 dated July 12, 1989, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 90-1670, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on January 30, 2009, at the hour of 11:30 a.m., at The Law Office of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 20th day of December, 2008:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

blow chili chilly

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

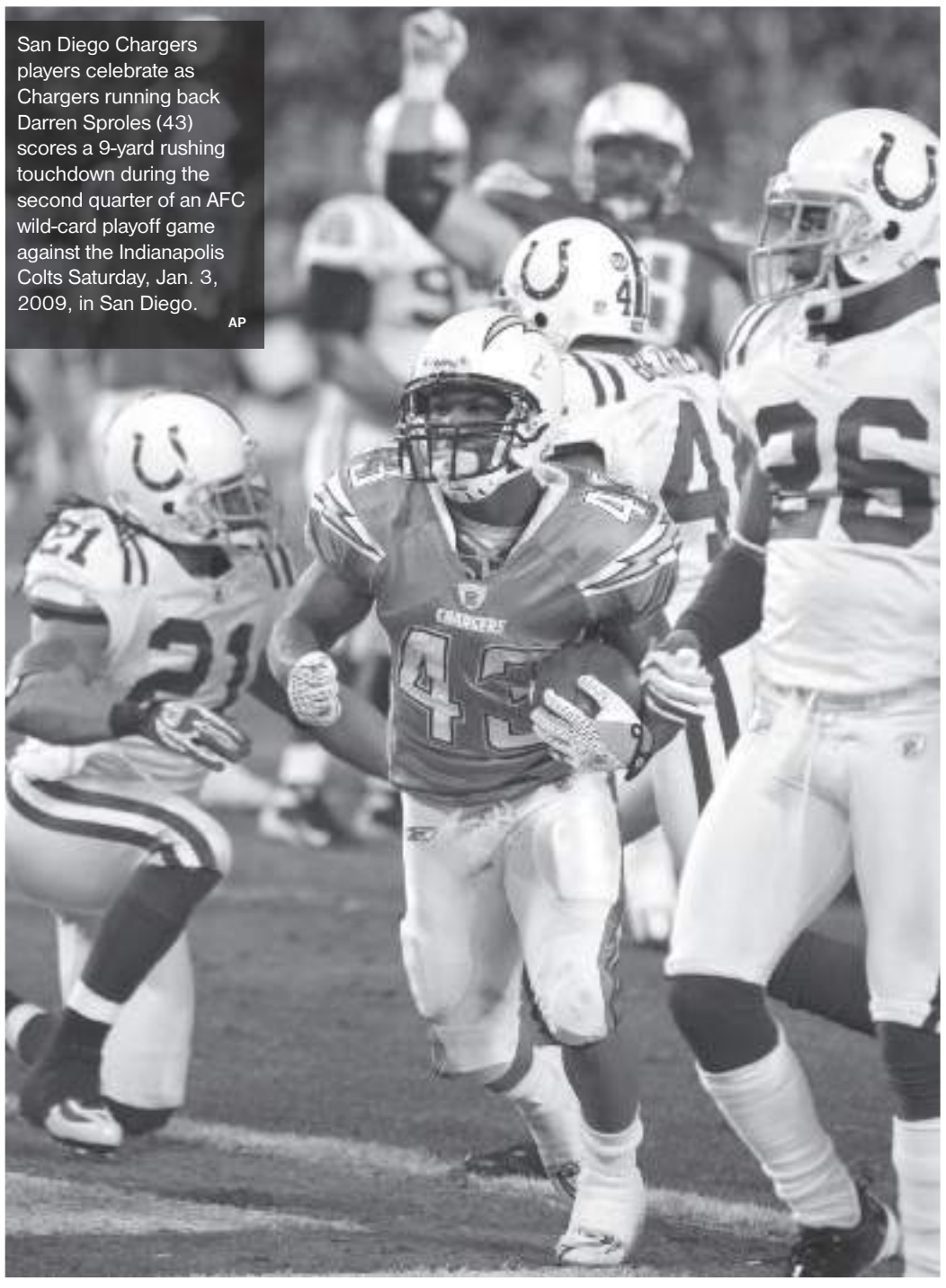
ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Chargers beat Colts 23-17 in OT

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Peyton Manning has his MVP award and nothing more, outdone again in January by the San Diego Chargers.

Speedy little Darren Sproles scooted 22 yards for the winning score 6:20 into overtime and the Chargers beat the Colts 23-17 in an AFC wild-card game Saturday night, ending Indianapolis' nine-game winning streak a day after Manning won his third Associated Press NFL MVP award.



San Diego Chargers players celebrate as Chargers running back Darren Sproles (43) scores a 9-yard rushing touchdown during the second quarter of an AFC wild-card playoff game against the Indianapolis Colts Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009, in San Diego. AP

Sproles came up big on a night when the Chargers played the final 2 1/2 quarters without LaDainian Tomlinson, who stood on the sideline in obvious discomfort from what appears to be a serious groin injury.

Fifty years after the Baltimore Colts won the first overtime game in league history by the same score over the New York Giants for the NFL title, Indianapolis wasn't so fortunate. It was victimized by Sproles, who rushed 23 times for 105 yards, caught five passes for 45 yards, had 106 yards on four kickoff returns and 72 on three punt runbacks.

"It's disappointing to lose a playoff game," Manning said. "We certainly had some chances to win, but give them credit. We had chances to put the game away, but we just didn't do it."

The Chargers (9-8) won the overtime toss. Indy's Darrell Reid called heads, but referee Ron Winter's flip came up tails. Sproles sent the Chargers into the second round of the playoffs, either at Tennessee or Pittsburgh, by finishing off the only series of overtime with his TD run around left end against an exhausted defense for the Colts (12-5).

San Diego's winning drive was aided by two defensive holding calls, the second against Tim Jennings on third-and-8. On the next play, Colts linebacker Clint Session was whistled for grabbing Sproles' facemask. Sproles scored on the next play, shedding a defender at the 5-yard line.

"You know, when your number is called, you have to be ready," said Sproles, who early in the game fumbled into the end zone, with the Colts recovering.

"Right after that fumble, it was still kind of in my mind," Sproles said. "I wanted that TD back to make up for the fumble."

Sproles' TD run sent Qualcomm Stadium into bedlam, and he ran off the field with the game ball. Manning hung his head in disappointment.

It was San Diego's fifth straight win; the Chargers needed the previous four victories to secure the AFC West title with an 8-8 record. San Diego was the ninth team to enter the playoffs with an 8-8 record and became just the third to win its opener. The Chargers had gone 0-5 against teams that made the playoffs, including a 23-20 loss to the Colts here on Nov. 23.

Last season, the Chargers pulled off a 28-24 upset at Indianapolis in the divisional round after Philip Rivers and Tomlinson both went out with knee injuries.

This was the fourth time the teams met in two seasons and the sixth time in five years. The Chargers have won four of the six.

San Diego got its first sack of the game at a key time, when Tim Dobbins dropped Manning at the Colts 1 on third down with 2 minutes left, forcing a punt and giving the Chargers the ball at the Indy 38.

Nate Kaeding kicked a 26-yard field goal with 31 seconds left to force overtime.

It was the 25th overtime game in the postseason, including one game in the AFL. The last overtime game in the playoffs was last season's NFC title game, won by the New York Giants and Manning's little brother, Eli, against Brett Favre and the Green Bay Packers.

Another star for the Chargers was Mike Scifres, whose booming punts continually pinned the Colts deep in their territory. Scifres punted six times for an average of 52.7 yards, including a 67-yarder.

"I don't know if you can dream a game like this," Scifres said.

Still, Manning caught the Chargers napping on a 72-yard touchdown play that for a while seemed like it was going to stand as the winner.

Facing third-and-5 from the Colts 28, Manning quickly lined up and took an immediate snap that caught cornerback Antonio Cromartie so flat-footed he was looking at the Chargers' bench when receiver Reggie Wayne went speeding past him and safety Paul Oliver. Wayne caught Manning's pass at the Chargers 45 and was gone for a 17-14 lead.

The Colts came up with two turnovers in the end zone. Sproles was hit at the 2-yard line and fumbled into the end zone late in the third quarter, with Raheem Brock recovering.

Rivers kept San Diego's next drive alive with a 13-yard scramble followed by a 1-yard sneak on fourth down, but then overthrew Chris Chambers in double coverage and was intercepted in the end zone by Antoine Bethea.

The teams traded TDs early, with Indy's Joseph Addai scoring on a 1-yard run late in the first quarter and Tomlinson scoring on a 3-yard run early in the second quarter, his last play of the game. The Colts went ahead 10-7 on Adam Vinatieri's 43-yard field goal midway through the second period before Sproles' 9-yard run just before halftime put the Chargers ahead 14-10.

Manning was 25-of-42 for 310 yards. Rivers was 20-of-36 for 216 yards, with one interception.

Tomlinson was hurt a week earlier in a 52-21 rout of Denver.

"From the first run, it was evident that I just didn't have the burst," said Tomlinson, who gained 14 yards on the game's first play from scrimmage. "I couldn't put my foot on the ground and get through the hole the way I wanted to. I went as long as I could. After the TD run, it was at the point where I felt like I was making it worse."

Warner, defense lead Cards past Falcons, 30-24

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—The Arizona Cardinals have consecutive home playoff victories—61 years apart. Kurt Warner opened with a 42-yard touchdown pass to Larry Fitzgerald and connected with Anquan Boldin on a 71-yard scoring play as the Cardinals beat Atlanta 30-24 Saturday before a raucous, towel-waving crowd.

It was the franchise's first home playoff game since the then-Chicago Cardinals beat Philadelphia to win the NFL championship in 1947.

"A lot of people coming into this game said we were the worst playoff team ever to get in," Arizona coach Ken Whisenhunt said. "... I think we rallied around that."

Atlanta rookie Matt Ryan was intercepted twice, was tackled in the end zone for a safety and fumbled the ball away on a botched handoff. That fumble was returned 27 yards by Antrel Rolle 52 seconds into the second half to put Arizona ahead for good.

Everyone knew the Cardinals could pass, but a stout defense and effective running game were a bonus.

"You have to really give credit first to their defense," Falcons guard Harvey Dahl said. "They did an outstanding job. They were flying all over the place."

Atlanta's 60 yards rushing represented a season low.

"We couldn't run the ball," Falcons wide receiver Roddy White said. "We had to throw it around a little bit more than we're used to. Things like that kind of put us behind the 8-ball."

Arizona's Edgerrin James outgained Atlanta's Michael Turner, the NFL's No. 2 rusher.

"They controlled the line of scrimmage," Falcons coach Mike Smith said of the Cardinals' defense.

James, who has made it known he will not be back with the Cardinals next season, carried 16 times for 73 yards. Turner, who rushed for 1,699 yards in the regular season, had 42 yards in 18 attempts.

Warner, in the playoffs for the first time since leading St. Louis to a second Super Bowl in 2001, was 19-of-32, 13-for-17 in the second half, for 271 yards. He was intercepted once.

"I hope this gives us a lot of confidence," Warner said. "I knew we thought we could win this game. Hopefully we can parlay this into some more confidence and know we can win wherever we have to go."

Arizona will play at either the New York Giants or Carolina Panthers next weekend. Arizona has played both teams this season, losing 27-23 at Carolina on Oct. 26, and 37-29 at home to the Giants on Nov. 23.

Ryan, the AP Offensive Rookie of the Year, completed 26 of 40 passes for 199 yards and two scores.

"I think you have to remember what we did as a team this year and we did some things well," Ryan said. "We made some strides as a team as the year went on. But you have to use this as motivation. You don't want to be here."

The Cardinals went 9-7 to win a weak NFC West and make the playoffs for the first time in a decade. After clinching the division, they were blown out by Minnesota and New England in the two weeks preceding their regular-season finale victory over Seattle.

Atlanta (11-5) finished a game behind Carolina in the tough NFC South and came in a winner of five of its last six. But from the start Arizona showed that, at least on this afternoon, it belonged in the postseason.

"A lot of people in Atlanta were giving us no chance," Arizona safety Adrian Wilson said. "There was a lot of talk in the paper from them about how it was a blessing for them to come out here—but it's not sweet out here."

Antonio Smith's tackle of Ryan for a safety put Arizona ahead 30-17 with 12:37 to play.

The Falcons, who rebounded from a 4-12 season to make the playoffs, made it close after that. On fourth-and-6, Ryan connected with Jerious Norwood for 28 yards to Cardinals 26. That led to Ryan's 5-yard scoring pass to Roddy White that cut it to 30-24 with 4:15 left.

But Warner completed passes to Fitzgerald, Steve Breaston and Stephen Spach, then the Cardinals ran out the clock.

When it was over, Whisenhunt ran along the front row of the stadium, exchanging high-fives with fans. The Cardinals didn't sell out the game until Friday, but the throng was loud and boisterous throughout.

Ryan's first pass of the playoffs was intercepted by Ralph Brown, leading to Warner's 42-yard TD to Fitzgerald on a flea-flicker. Early in the second quarter, Warner threw short to Boldin, who beat safety Lawyer Milloy and ran down the sideline on a 71-yard scoring play.

Boldin hurt his left hamstring on the play. He played the next series, then left for good.

Atlanta scored twice in the final 2:55 to take a 17-14 halftime, then got the ball on the second-half kickoff.

Defensive tackle Darnell Dockett was the disruptive force on the crucial fumble.

"I just jumped the snap count, man," he said. "I needed to make a play. We needed a spark. We were down and that was the play that turned this whole thing around."

Dockett hit Turner just as Ryan was trying to hand off the ball. The ball bounced off Turner's forearm and into the hands of Rolle, who raced to the end zone.

The Cardinals mustered their first extended drive of the game later in the third quarter. Moving the ball with James' running and Warner's short passes, Arizona used up 7:43, going 76 yards in 14 plays. Warner's 14-yard pass to Breaston on third-and-3 set up Tim Hightower's 4-yard run that made it 28-17.

Wade ignites Heat's OT win over Nets

MIAMI (AP)—Dwyane Wade scored 29 points, had three key blocks in the closing minutes and the Miami Heat overcame a 16-point deficit to beat the New Jersey Nets 101-96 in overtime Saturday night.

Wade did it all in the Heat's biggest comeback victory of the season.

The superstar went up high for two blocks on 7-footer Brook Lopez, including one in overtime, and swatted a jumper by Vince Carter into the stands in the final minute of regulation. Wade's 3-point play with 37.2 seconds left in overtime stretched Miami's lead to eight at 96-88.

Trailing by 16 points in the first quarter, the Heat rode a season-high 19 points from Yakhouba Diawara and 17 points from Michael Beasley. Miami's biggest previous comeback was Dec. 22 against Indiana, when it rallied from 15 points down.

New Jersey cut it to 99-96, but Carter's desperation 3-point attempt missed.

Keyon Dooling had 23 points, and Carter had 20 for the Nets, who won in overtime a night earlier against the Atlanta Hawks.

Both teams took big blows before the game even began.

Devin Harris, who leads New Jersey in scoring and assists, was resting a sore right hamstring and was inactive against Miami. And Heat forward Shawn Marion had back spasms and was a late scratch.

The rest of the starters would fill in fine.

Wade missed a jumper from just inside the arc as the fourth quarter buzzer sounded.

Wade had given the Heat an 85-83 lead on a pair of free throws, but Dooling hit a runner in the lane to tie it at 85 with 8.4 seconds left.

Hawks 103, Rockets 100

At Atlanta, Mike Bibby made a 3-pointer with 1.5 seconds remaining, and Josh Smith scored a season-high 29 points for Atlanta.

Joe Johnson had a season-high 14 assists, the last when he drove from the perimeter and into the left side of the lane before passing to Bibby for the winner.

The Hawks won their sixth straight at home, improving to 15-2 this season at Philips Arena.

Reserve Carl Landry scored 18 points, and Yao Ming had 16 points and 15 rebounds for Houston, which has dropped two straight and five of seven.

Pacers 122, Kings 117

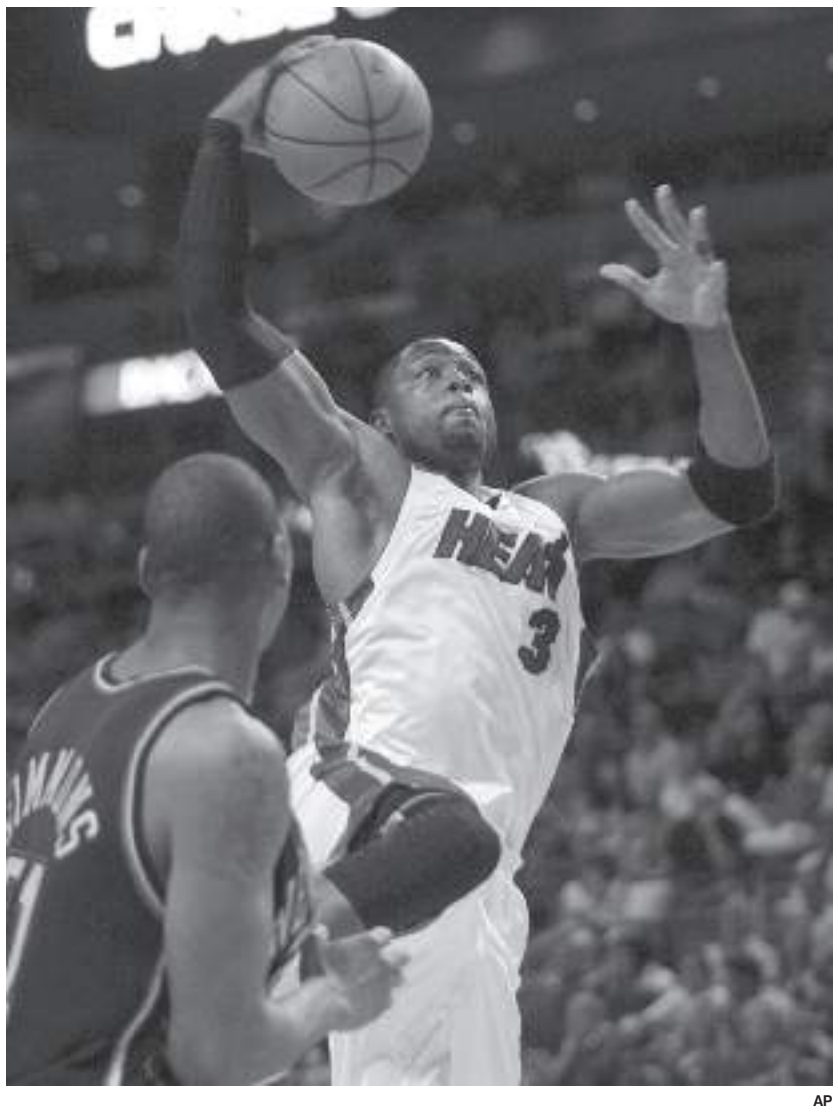
At Indianapolis, Danny Granger scored 13 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter in Indiana's second straight victory.

T.J. Ford had 16 points and seven assists, and Troy Murphy added 12 points and 13 rebounds.

Kevin Martin led Sacramento with a season-high 45 points, making 13 of 24 shots and a career-high seven 3-pointers. The Kings are 1-8 in their last nine games.

Bobcats 102, Bucks 92

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Gerald Wallace scored 24 points, Boris Diaw added 21 and Charlotte snapped a three-game losing streak.



AP

Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade drives to the basket as New Jersey Nets' Bobby Simmons looks on during the second quarter of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009.

The NBA's lowest-scoring team took advantage of Milwaukee center Andrew Bogut's absence because of back spasms to avenge a Friday loss in Milwaukee.

Richard Jefferson scored 19 points for Milwaukee.

Spurs 108, 76ers 106

At San Antonio, Tony Parker hit a high-arching 15-footer at the buzzer and San Antonio won after blowing an early 21-point lead.

Parker finished with 15 points and 10 assists to help the Spurs win for the seventh time in eight games. Tim Duncan led San Antonio with 26 points on 11-of-15 shooting.

Andre Miller led Philadelphia with 28 points on 12-of-14 shooting.

Timberwolves 102, Bulls 92

At Chicago, Randy Foye scored 21 points, and Al Jefferson added 18 points and 14 rebounds to help Minnesota win consecutive games for the first time this season.

Derrick Rose had 22 points for Chicago, which has lost six of its last seven games.

Nuggets 105, Hornets 100

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 22 points, including a layup with 56.5 seconds left, and Denver recovered after blowing a 26-point lead.

J.R. Smith scored 11 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter for Denver.

Chris Paul had 30 points and 11 assists for New Orleans.

Barkley arrested on suspicion of DUI

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Charles Barkley was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol early Wednesday.

An officer with a task force that targets drunken driving saw the former NBA star run a stop sign about 1:30 a.m., Gilbert police Lt. Eric Shuhandler said. Barkley was in Scottsdale's Old Town area, a trendy spot in the Phoenix area.

Barkley

"I am disappointed that I put myself in that situation," Barkley said in a statement to The Associated Press. "The Scottsdale police were fantastic. I will not comment any further as it is a legal matter."

The 45-year-old Barkley, now an NBA television commentator, failed field sobriety tests after the officer smelled alcohol on him, and he was arrested. Barkley declined to submit to a breath test but was given a blood test. The results weren't immediately available.

Barkley was cited and released. His car was impounded and he left in a cab, Shuhandler said. Police described Barkley as cooperative, adding it is customary to release people after an arrest on suspicion of DUI.

"There was nothing unusual about how he was taken into custody," Shuhandler said. "He was treated exactly like we treat anybody else."

In 1997, Barkley was arrested in Orlando, Fla., and charged with hurling a bar patron through a glass window after the man tossed a glass of ice at him. The case was settled after Barkley was fined and performed community service.

Barkley was selected one the NBA's 50 greatest players in 1996 and was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006. He played 16 seasons for Philadelphia, Phoenix and Houston and was on the 1992 and 1996 Olympic teams. Barkley was an 11-time NBA All-Star and league MVP in 1993.

He starred at Auburn and last month was inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame.

MLB BRIEFS

Reports: Red Sox reach deal with RHP Brad Penny

The Boston Red Sox and pitcher Brad Penny reached a preliminary agreement on a $5 million, one-year contract, according to several reports Monday. The team also struck a tentative agreement with catcher Josh Bard and both deals are pending physicals, the reports said. A two-time All-Star, the 30-year-old Penny struggled with injuries to his shoulder and side last season with the Los Angeles Dodgers. He went 6-9 with a 6.27 ERA in 17 starts and two relief appearances. The big right-hander would join a talented Boston rotation that includes Josh Beckett, Daisuke Matsuzaka, Jon Lester and knuckleballer Tim Wakefield. Penny was teammates with Beckett and Red Sox third baseman Mike Lowell in Florida, helping the Marlins win the 2003 World Series. Penny pitched well in that series against the New York Yankees, going 2-0 with a 2.19 ERA in two starts. He was the NL starter in the 2006 All-Star game and finished that year 16-9 with a 4.33 ERA. The following season, Penny went 16-4 with a 3.03 ERA in 33 starts covering 208 innings and placed third in NL Cy Young Award voting. According to the reports, Penny could earn an additional $3 million in performance bonuses with the Red Sox. He is 94-75 with a 4.06 ERA in nine big league seasons.

Cubs, infielder Aaron Miles agree on 2-year deal

CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago Cubs and infielder Aaron Miles agreed Wednesday to a two-year, $4.9 million contract. The switch-hitting Miles batted .317 with four homers and 31 RBIs in 134 games for the St. Louis Cardinals last season. "We expect Aaron to provide significant versatility and flexibility to our roster," Cubs general manager Jim Hendry said. Last season Miles played mostly at second base with 85 appearances. He also played short, third and all three outfield positions. In 643 major league games, the 32-year-old Miles has a career average of .289. He has also played with the White Sox and Rockies. Miles was originally selected by the Houston Astros in the 19th round of the 1995 draft. "I want to play the game the right way and show St. Louis they let somebody go that maybe they shouldn't have," Miles said during a conference call "I was a little surprised given the situation and how well I did last year. I felt I was part of the team. Financially I understand why they did it. It was still kind of shocking. I felt I had a place over there."

Indians acquire INF Mark DeRosa to play third

CLEVELAND (AP)—After some debate and a trade, the Cleveland Indians have decided not to shift their infield. The club acquired versatile infielder Mark DeRosa to place third base on Wednesday, trading three minor leaguers to the Chicago Cubs. They dealt pitchers Jeff Stevens, Chris Archer and John Gaub for DeRosa, who played six different positions for the NL Central champions. In Cleveland, he'll be the club's everyday third baseman and fill in occasionally in the outfield. "We're going to take advantage of his versatility," Indians general manager Mark Shapiro said. "As the season unfolds, that's one of the many assists he can bring to the table." The 33-year-old DeRosa hit a career-high 21 homers and drove in 87 runs last season in 149 games. One of the Indians' priorities during the offseason was to find a dependable, right-handed hitting infielder. They considered moving shortstop Jhonny Peralta to third and Asdrubal Cabrera from second to short, but will keep things as status quo with DeRosa sliding into the starting job at third. "This is the best infield, that's it," Shapiro said addressing the club's decision to keep Peralta and Cabrera in place. "If we didn't think it was best, we would have moved three guys." DeRosa made 80 starts at second base, 10 at third, 32 in right field and 27 in left. He also played one game each at first and shortstop. Shapiro said he has been in talks with Cubs GM Jim Hendry about DeRosa since November.

Angels agree to terms with reliever Brian Fuentes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Free-agent reliever Brian Fuentes and the Los Angeles Angels reached agreement on a two-year, $17.5 million deal Wednesday, giving the AL West champions a replacement for record-setting closer Francisco Rodriguez. Fuentes gets $8.5 million next season and $9 million in 2010. There's a club option for $9 million in 2011. "He should solidify the back part of our bullpen," Angels general manager Tony Reagins said on a conference call. "We pitched well last year, we expect to pitch well again." Fuentes, a 33-year-old lefty, was a three-time NL All-Star who went 1-5 with 30 saves in 34 chances and a 2.73 ERA for Colorado this season. He had a 1.75 ERA after the All-Star break, when he saved 16 games in as many chances. "I'm definitely happy to have the opportunity to play for a team that I've watched for a long time," said Fuentes, who grew up in Merced, Calif., and still lives there. "My 2-year-old's excited. He can't wait to go to Disneyland." Regarding Angels manager Mike Scioscia, Fuentes said: "From what I hear from other guys, he's a player's manager." Rodriguez posted 62 saves for the Angels this season to break Bobby Thigpen's single-season record of 57. K-Rod signed a three-year, $37 million contract with the New York Mets three weeks ago.

Heo leaves for Australia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_sporty@yahoo.com
REPORTER

Ji Hoon Heo left Saipan for Australia yesterday and will play his first game in the 2009 Post Margaret Court Cup on Thursday at the Albury Grasscourts in Albury, New South Wales.

The CNMI netter, who is now ranked No. 1226 in the Junior ITF rankings moving up 400 notches higher with former ranked players going over the age limit (18 years old), is entered in the boys' 16 singles and doubles division of the Margaret Court Cup.

Margaret Court Cup is named after the retired former world No. 1 tennis player from Australia—Margaret Jean Court. In 1970, she became the first woman during the open era and the second woman ever to win all four Grand Slam singles titles in the same calendar year.

The Cup will run from Jan. 7 to 12 with the opening day set for a team tournament.

Heo's opening match in the boys' 16-and-under singles will be against 15-year-old Joshua Verity of Thurgoona, NSW.

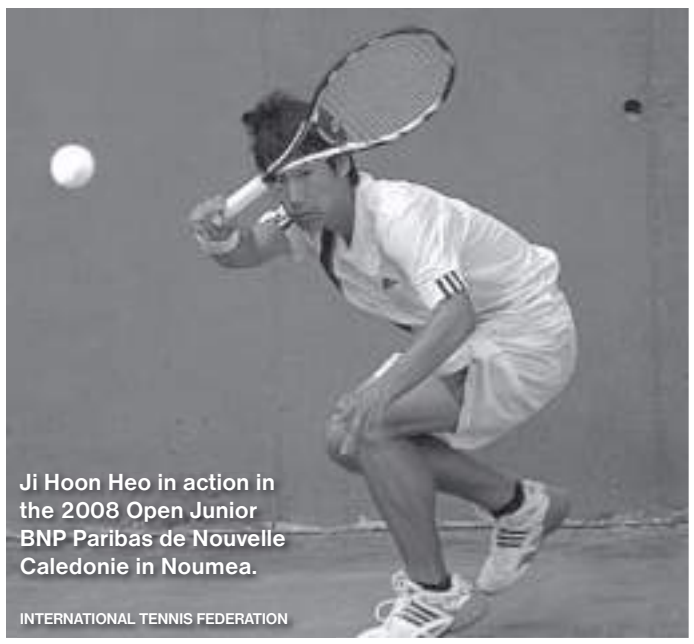
In the doubles event, Heo will team up with fellow ITF Pacific Oceania bet and Fiji's William O'Connell. The duo will collide with Michael Galante and Matt Thompson of Albany, Wodonga in the opening match.

From Albury, Heo and the rest of the ITF Pacific Oceania Touring Team will head to Wodonga for another tournament (Jan. 13 to 17). On Jan. 18, the group will travel to Melbourne to see a couple of matches in the Australian Open.

From Melbourne, Heo will go to Christchurch, New Zealand to train and prepare for tournaments in Canterbury, Auckland, and Wellington.

In New Zealand, Heo will have a chance to earn ranking points, but he still needs to win in qualifying tournaments before moving up to the main draws. He will stay in New Zealand from Jan. 21 to Feb. 14.

The CNMI netter was invited to compete in tournaments in Australia and New Zealand after placing second in the boys' 18-and-under division of the 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji.



Ji Hoon Heo in action in the 2008 Open Junior BNP Paribas de Nouvelle Caledonie in Noumea.

INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION

LIL'SONICS

From Page 28

aged to recover and steal the win behind the heroics of John Darag, Max Camacho, and Angelo Salas.

The trio scored the Lil' Sonics last 14 points with Darag and Camacho getting feeds from Salas, who besides calling the plays for his team also nailed crucial baskets in the stretch.

Salas' layup moved the Sonics within two 71-73, with less than three minutes left in the game. He then set up Camacho for a layup and an undergoal stab in the ensuing plays, which saw the Sixers I making only a free throw, to put the Lil'Sonics in the driver's seat for the first time since the first half, 75-74.

Still celebrating after grabbing the lead, the Lil'Sonics forgot to play defense on the other end and paid the price, as Jed Villanueva made a layup to regain the upperhand, 76-75. But Lil' Sonics quickly retook the lead with Salas' making another deuce and Camacho finding himself free for an underneath basket increasing his team's lead to three, 79-76, with 1:13 left on the clock.

Sixers I coach Ray Duenas had seen enough and sued for time after Vilanueva was fouled in their offensive set. The Lil' Sonics was not yet in the penalty, so when play resumed the Sixers were forced to set up a new play, which faltered as Villanueva muffed his baseline drive.

Salas slowly brought the ball down to their frontcourt and just when the Sixers I's defense thought the Lil' Sonics guard will waste more time setting up a play, Salas picked up his pace and drove to the right baseline for another basket.

The Sixers I refused to give up despite trailing by five, 81-76, with less than 40 seconds left in the game, and moved within three, 78-83, after John Cenir nailed layup.

With 14.5 seconds remaining on the clock, Duenas was shouting from the sidelines telling his players to give up a foul to save time. But Sixers I wasted five seconds before holding off Darag, who put icing on the cake with his two free throw shots which hit nothing but the bottom of the net.

The last nine seconds of the match saw the Sixers I's Jack Aranda pulling up for a triple, getting fouled, but missing all his charities, and Villanueva muffing a layup.

The Sixers I were in front at halftime, 49-36, and increased the lead to as much as 13 by putting up a backcourt trapping defense against the rattled Lil' Sonics. But fatigue caught the Sixers I midway in the second half, allowing Darag, Camacho, and Salas to walk away from the Sixers' defense and drilled successive baskets.

Darag paced the Lil'Sonics with 21 points, making 13 in the second half, while Salas fired 12 of his 15 in the final 20 minutes of the game. Camacho added 20 markers, also making 12 in the second half. Scott Escalada was the other double figure scorer for the Lil'Sonics hitting 17 markers.

Lady Knights 61, Lady Ayuyus 56

In the girls' 14/18-and-under division, the Lady Knights stepped on the pedal in the second half to beat the Lady Ayuyus.

The Lady Knights were ahead by only one at halftime, 27-26, when Roxanne Duenas, Nicole Lebria, and Noelle Calvo led their team's breakaway in the second half leading by as much as 18 points, 50-32.

Yvonne Bennett tried to bring the Ayuyus back, but fell short, as time was not on their side, and the closest they could get was within four points, (55-59), with only 19 seconds left in the game and the Lady Knights having the possession and the luxury of melting the clock.

Duenas led all scorers with 24 points, while Lebria and Calvo chipped in 18 and 13 markers, respectively.

G-Stars 86, Rollers A 77

In the boys' 18-and-under finals, the G-Stars outscored Rollers A in the last 9:40 of the first half, 25-5, to take a commanding 52-30 halftime lead en route to a nine-point title win.

The Rollers A, which was still in the game behind by only two, 25-27, went scoreless for about six minutes before a pair of free throws from Don Teregeyo ended the drought. But these charities were not enough to spark a Rollers A major comeback and repeat the team's come-from-behind overtime win over the Sonics (120-110) in the semifinals Friday night.

As expected, CNMI Junior National player Jericho Cruz topscored for the G-Stars with 33 points. He drew double figures contribution from Nate Mateo (14 points), Clayton Kenty (11), and Ryan Ichihara (10).

Luizi Reyes paced Rollers A with 23 points, while Don Teregeyo added 22.

Finals Scores

Boys U14

Lil'Sonics 83—Darag 21, Camacho 20, Escalada 17, Salas 15, Dela Cruz 8, Limes 2.

Sixers 1 78—Maratita 22, Cenir 21, Francisco 11, Villanueva 10,Aranda 8, Salem 6.

Scoring by halves: 39-46, 83-78

Girls U14/18

Lady Knights 61—Duenas 24, N. Lebria 18, Calvo 13, Joseph 4, K. Lebria 2.

Lady Ayuyus 56—Yvonne Bennett 14, Diaz 12, Hofschneider 10, Repeki 10, Yvette Bennett 8, Mesa 2.

Scoring by halves: 27-26, 61-56

Boys U18

G-Stars 86—Cruz 33, N. Mateo 14, Kenty 11, Ichihara 10, Jung 6, D. Mateo 5, Manalili 2, Feria 2, Sablan 1.

Rollers A 77—Reyes 23, Teregeyo 22, Matagolai 18, Ogarto 5, Tudela 4, Hambros 2, Camacho 2, Namelo 2.

Scoring by halves: 52-30, 86-77.

CAMACHO

From Page 28

Also winning MVP honors in other divisions were the G-Stars' Jericho Cruz (boys 18-and-under) and the Lady Knights' Roxanne Duenas (girls' 18-and-under).

Cruz scored 33 points in the G-Stars 86-77 title win over Rollers A, while Duenas fired 24 markers in the Lady Knights' finals triumph over the Lady Ayuyus, 61-56.

Besides honoring the MVP awardees, organizers of the tournament also cited the Top 5 individual performers in each division.

The list include Victoria Reyes, Stephanie Camacho, Mikky Vargas, Azuko Halstead, and Lailani Rabauliman in the girls' 14-and-under; Camacho, Darag, Jack Aranda, Jed Villanueva, and Raymond Villagomez (boys' 14-and-under); Duenas, Nolelle Calvo, Nicole Lebria, Mercedes Mesa, and Lalaine Pagarao (girls' 18-and-under); and Manny Matagolai, Joseph Ada, Don Teregeyo, Trevor Ogumoro, and Michael Eclevia (boys' 18-and-under).

MVPs received trophies, while the Top 5 took home medals.

BUD

From Page 28

Completing the Top 3 was USSP Fotten Palau, which is composed of John Mongami, Taylor Watanabe, Ron Chisato, Rick Rengiil, Anni Tesiro, and Mei Rengiil.

The Husters won their second trophy after topping the Agingan division of the Bud Cup, while Primo's Home Boys went 2-for-2 in 2008, as they also prevailed in the Bud Cup (Obyan).

Primo's Cultura was adjudged MVP in the Obyan division, while Talibong claimed the MVP honors in the Agingan category.

Other individual awardees were Zapata and Rick Rengiil (8 on the break) and Caisip, Ed Manucduc and, Cultura (run the rack).

The Sportsmanship Award went to Coral Reef Shark Attack (Agingan) and Coral Reef Barracuda (Obyan).

Shark Attack is composed of Bernard Kileleman, Patrick Taitano, Vince Mareham, Ben Norita, Patrick Maanao, Bill Limes, and Jerry Ayuyu.

Members of Barracuda are Nizer Masayos, Steve Limes, John Peter, Leo and Oscar Sablan, Esang Olkeriil, and Thomas Tebuteb.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Bud Cup champions Krystal Docomo Hustlers (Agingan division) show their trophies during the awards banquet at Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	29	5	.853	_
New Jersey	16	18	.471	13
Philadelphia	13	20	.394	15 1/2
Toronto	13	20	.394	15 1/2
New York	12	19	.387	15 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	26	7	.788	_
Atlanta	22	11	.667	4
Miami	18	14	.563	7 1/2
Charlotte	12	22	.353	14 1/2
Washington	6	25	.194	19

Central Division

Cleveland	27	5	.844	_
Detroit	20	11	.645	6 1/2
Milwaukee	16	19	.457	12 1/2
Chicago	14	20	.412	14
Indiana	12	21	.364	15 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	22	11	.667	_
New Orleans	20	10	.667	_
Dallas	20	12	.625	1 1/2
Houston	21	14	.600	2
Memphis	10	23	.303	12

Northwest Division

Denver	23	12	.657	_
Portland	20	13	.606	2
Utah	19	15	.559	3 1/2
Minnesota	8	25	.242	14
Oklahoma City	4	30	.118	18 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	26	5	.839	_
Phoenix	19	12	.613	7
Golden State	10	25	.286	18
L.A. Clippers	8	24	.250	18 1/2
Sacramento	8	26	.235	19 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Indiana 122, Sacramento 117
Atlanta 103, Houston 100
Charlotte 102, Milwaukee 92
Miami 101, New Jersey 96, OT
Minnesota 102, Chicago 92
San Antonio 108, Philadelphia 106
Denver 105, New Orleans 100

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Wade, Mia.	31	321	229	893	28.8
James, Clev.	32	308	224	879	27.5
Bryant, LAL	31	299	197	830	26.8
Nowitzki, Dall.	31	296	180	803	25.9
Granger, Ind.	29	242	161	718	24.8
Durant, OKC.	33	285	173	787	23.8
Harris, N.J.	30	215	253	711	23.7
Bosh, Tor.	33	267	233	776	23.5
Johnson, Atl.	32	276	114	739	23.1
Roy, Port.	31	249	183	712	23.0
Jefferson, Minn.	32	304	125	733	22.9
Carter, N.J.	33	259	161	743	22.5
Randolph, LAC	25	215	102	550	22.0
Stoudemire, Phoe.	31	241	190	675	21.8
J. Terry, Dall.	32	253	99	676	21.1
Anthony, Den.	29	213	152	612	21.1
Gordon, Chi.	33	239	136	693	21.0
Duncan, S.A.	32	259	145	663	20.7
Jamison, Wash.	31	247	109	639	20.6
Butler, Wash.	28	207	134	575	20.5

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Nene, Den.	186	300	.620
O'Neal, Phoe.	165	279	.591
Okafor, Char.	183	314	.583
Lee, N.Y.	188	328	.573
Millsap, Utah	184	330	.558
Bogut, Mil.	151	271	.557
Gasol, LAL	198	356	.556
Stoudemire, Phoe.	241	434	.555
Howard, Orl.	207	376	.551
Biedrins, G.S.	202	367	.550

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DE	TOT	AVG
Howard, Orl.	31	139	289	428	13.8
Camby, LAC	28	99	272	371	13.3
Biedrins, G.S.	35	152	266	418	11.9
Murphy, Ind.	27	57	259	316	11.7
Okafor, Char.	33	135	234	369	11.2
Lee, N.Y.	31	94	245	339	10.9
Bogut, Mil.	31	102	225	327	10.5
Jefferson, Minn.	32	101	229	330	10.3
Duncan, S.A.	32	82	246	328	10.3
Bosh, Tor.	33	91	231	322	9.8

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Paul, N.O.	29	334	11.5
Williams, Utah	21	206	9.8
Calderon, Tor.	31	270	8.7
Kidd, Dall.	32	275	8.6
Duhon, N.Y.	31	262	8.5
Nash, Phoe.	27	226	8.4
B. Davis, LAC	30	241	8.0
Rondo, Bos.	34	263	7.7
Wade, Mia.	31	217	7.0
Billups, Den.	32	220	6.9

By The Associated Press

The Week in Sports

Swimmers, runners end 2008 with a bang

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The last week of 2008 saw Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan swimmers and CNMI distance runners making record-breaking performances.

Tsunami Saipan shattered 11 CNMI records in the Guam International Swim Meet held at the Hagatna Swimming Pool from on Dec. 27 and 28.

Rezne Wong owned six of those marks, while Kai Staal had four, and Shin Kimura made one.

Wong timed in at 33.18 seconds in the 50m breaststroke to break the boys' 17-18 age group record of 33.35, which he himself recorded in October 2008 during the Tsunami Saipan-Saipan Swim Club dual meet.

In the 100m breaststroke race, the 18-year-old Wong posted 1:10.21 eclipsing his 1:10.62 mark in the same age group in November last year.

The 17-18 age group record in the 200m breaststroke also fell with Wong finishing the race in 2:30.54, breaking Justin Pierce's 2:30.56 mark on June 5, 1999.

Rezne's time in the three breaststroke swims are also new CNMI National records.

Kai Staal broke four records in the boys' 13-14 age group. Less than two months after posting a mark in the 200m freestyle (2:07.16), Staal crushed his own record, timing in at 2:07.15 in Guam.

Staal's set his second record-breaking swim in the 400m freestyle timing in at 4:34.13 and passing Joshua Taitano's 4: 35.37 set on Aug. 17, 1995.

The Saipan International School student also reset his own record (35.97 seconds) in the 50m breaststroke, when he finished the same event in Guam in 35.33 seconds.

Staal also competed in the 100m breaststroke and timed in at 1:16.07 to eclipse Wong's record of 1:16.48 (Feb. 17, 2006).

Kimura set a new record in the 15-16 age group's 800m freestyle when he posted 9:46.04. The Grace Christian Academy student past Robert Jordan's 9:54.61 mark on Jan. 27, 1996.

While Tsunami Saipan conquered the Hagatna Swimming Pool with their record-setting swims, the Road Rulers reigned in the flat course of the 13.7-mile 2008 Christmas Island Relay.

The Road Rulers, who were composed of Champ Untalan, Matt Mancao, Nate Mateo, Robin Sapong, and Yvonne Bennett, finished the race that started at Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio and ended at the Last Command Post in Marpi in one hour, 30 minutes, 41 seconds.

The Road Rulers' time shattered the 1:33:04 set by 2007 champion We Are Legends.

Also making it to the end of the year winners' list were bowlers Emi Williams, Simon Manacop, and Raphael Zapanta, and Ghasias Brothers.

Manacop won his fifth monthly competition of 2008 following four 200-plus rolls in the December roll-offs.

The Department of Public Safety officer had 203 pinfalls in Game 1, 212 in Game 2, 221 in Game 3, and 225 in Game 4 for a total of 861and a 215.25 pinfall average. He won the roll-offs in March, June, September, and October last year.

Williams got her third straight Queen of the Lanes winning the October, November, and December editions of the competition. She topped the last monthly tournament of 2008 after collecting 722 pinfalls.

Zapanta had the most monthly wins in 2008 with nine adding the December victory to the list.

The youth bowler totaled 647 pinfalls in four games to edge Leanne Yarobwemal (643) for the December Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes title. Zapanta previously prevailed in the February, March, May, June, July, August, October, and November roll-offs.

Ghasias Brothers made a comeback in the 2008-2009 season of the World Organized Rocball Community League after several years of absence and had a successful return following their finals victory over the Fanians.

Ghasias swept the Fanians in the best-of-three title series winning Game 1 in double overtime, 113-105, and nailing a juiced-out win in Game 2, 93-85.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Tsunami Saipan's Marystar Welch, Kai Staal, Kensuke Kimura, Rezne Wong, and Shin Kimura pose for a group photo during a break in a tournament in Guam.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

December King of the Lanes Simon Manacop is flanked by runners-up Dannie Robles, left, and Jorge Soledad.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

December Queen of the Lanes Emi Williams is flanked by runners-up Lala Taitano, left, and Jerrie Vales.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Raphael Zapanta is flanked by Leanne Yarobwemal, left, and Marion McKenzie.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Road Rulers near the finish line in the 2008 Annual Christmas Island Relay.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Cole Chambers of Zoo Crew cruises along Beach Road during the 2008 Annual Christmas Island Relay.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Fanians player in action during their title match against Ghasias Brothers in the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Ghasias Brothers player returns the ball during their title match against the Fanians in the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Chargers beat Colts 23-17 in OT

Peyton Manning has his MVP award and nothing more, outdone again in January by the San Diego Chargers.

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Sports

Swimmers, runners end 2008 with a bang

The last week of 2008 saw Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan swimmers and CNMI distance runners making record-breaking performances.

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Lil'Sonics lead Holiday Hoops winners

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Members and supporters of the Lil' Sonics pose for a group photo after beating the Sixers I in the finals of the boys' 14-and-under division of the Holiday Hoops Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam concluded Saturday with three teams winning division titles.

The Lil' Sonics were among the top finishers in the Holiday Hoops and provided the most exciting finale at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium pulling off a come-from-behind win over the San Antonio Sixers, 83-78, in the boys' 14-and-under title game.

Joining the Lil'Sonics in the champions' circle were the Lady Knights and the G-Stars, who downed the Lady Ayuyus and Rollers A, in the girls and boys' 18-and-under division finals, respectively.

The Jesse Tudela-mentored Lil' Sonics were down by as much as 13 points, 67-54, in the last nine minutes of the game, but man-

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The Lady Knights' Roxanne Duenas goes for a reverse layup against a Lady Ayuyus defender during their title game in the girls' 18-and-under division.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Camacho takes MVP plum

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Max Camacho made an impressive debut in the 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam Festival after leading the Lil' Sonics to a title win in the boys' 14-and-under division and claiming the most valuable player award.

Camacho, who played for the Grace Christian Academy varsity team last season and is among the new recruits of Sonics coach Jesse Tudela this year, scored 20 points in their finals game against the Sixers 1.

The Lil' Sonics won the match via a come-from-behind 83-78 victory with Camacho making crucial contributions to the team's rally in the last nine minutes of the game.

Camacho nailed only eight points in the first half and seemed headed to finish the game on the bench when he sustained a minor injury in the last three minutes of the match.

But after only a few plays, Tudela called Camacho from the bench and the latter responded with six points in the stretch to help the Lil' Sonics steal the win.

Camacho, along with Angelo Salas and John Darag led the Lil' Sonics to a 3-0 record in the pool play and an 88-75 semis win over Rollers A.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Boys' 14-and-under MVP Max Camacho of the Lil' Sonics pulls up for a jumper against a Sixers I defender during their title match in the Holiday Hoops Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Bud Cup, Open 8-Ball winners feted

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Top individual and team performers in the Saipan Billiards Association's Budweiser Open 8-Ball League winter-spring '08 and in the Bud Cup were honored in a banquet yesterday at Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.

The PTI Voyagers, who won the Agingan division of the Open 8-Ball, received their championship trophy from league secretary Charlotte Tenepere.

The Voyagers are composed of Rolly Villanueva, R.J. Mascarinas, Jojo Talibong, Jean Cadag, Roman Rodriguez, Amor Zapata, Ryan Odicta, and Luis Fajardo.

Taking home the runner-up trophy were the Krystal Docomo Hustlers, who have Jerry Soriano, Rowel Mariano, Joey Lucido, Erwin Gomez, John Ricafort, James Lee, and Robert Sanciangco as members.

Round 2's Islanders Rent A Car received the third place trophy. The team is composed of Boyet Sequioco, Ronnie Ringor, Joey Cruz, Erick Caisip, Don Antonio, Rey Pinangay, and Jomer Enriquez.

In the Obyan division, Primo's Home Boys went home with the championship trophy. Receiving individual championship plums were Home Boys members Nolan Cultura, Mario Diola, Franz De Luna, George Lizardo, Bambu Lacandazo, and Juancho Mendoza.

The Krystal Perfect Spotters, whose members include Serge Tibudan, Jonny Dugos, Mario Jumalon, Primo Ferrere, and Erick Piol, settled for the runnerup trophy.

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Members of the PTI Voyagers and their wives pose with their championship trophies during the awards banquet for the Saipan Billiards Association's Budweiser Open 8-Ball League winter-spring '08 yesterday at Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO